WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN THE BUREAU OF MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE:

RESULTS FROM STAFF SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS

October 2005

Steven L. McMurtry, Ph.D.

Susan J. Rose, Ph.D

Helen Bader School of Social Welfare

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph.D.

Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

Susan Mayer, Ph.D.

Chapin Hall Center for Children

University of Chicago

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Acknowledgments

This report is a product of considerable effort by many people beyond those on the research team, and we wish to thank them for their help. Members of the project Steering Committee, appointed to provide input and feedback to the team, were instrumental in providing us with a context for the research, illuminating key issues, and helping us ask the right questions. Members of the Committee included Heidi Ambos, April Behounek, Anne Robinson, and Eric Underly of Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP), Darlene Kuhn of La Causa, Cathy Swessel and Jay Gaethke of Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), Lisa Maxwell of First Choices for Children at Lutheran Social Services (LSS), and Susette Gordon and Nadine Sherman of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. We are also grateful for the help of Bureau and private agency staff at each of the various sites who passed along information to other staff about the surveys and distributed the paper versions to workers and supervisors.

Agency administrators Sharon Dossett at CFCP, Frank Gaunt at La Causa, Mike Kenitz at Innovative Family Partnerships, Elaine Ries and Deb Rosen at LSS, and Cathy Swessel at CSSW were generous with their time and ideas at the conceptualization phase of the study, provided detailed feedback on the survey instrument that strengthened it substantially, and helped maximize the response rate to the survey through energetic encouragement of their respective staffs. Also integral to this and all other phases of the process was the assistance of Bureau Director Denise Revels Robinson, Deputy Director Dave Hergert, and administrative assistant Linda Ashley. At the Children and Family Services Division of the Department of Health and Family Services in Madison, project coordinators Emily Curtis and Judie Hermann maintained regularly contact with project staff and responded quickly to our requests. Finally, we are grateful to Division Administrators Burnie Bridge and Kitty Kocol and Deputy Administrator Bill Fiss for the opportunity to conduct the study and for their support and assistance throughout.

At UWM, Dr. Michael Brondino was immensely helpful in overseeing the logistics of both the web-based and paper based surveys, ably assisted by Sonya Sedivy. Megan Haak was invaluable as an all-purpose research assistant, helping with the literature review, survey design, data entry, file management, and data analysis. Frances Pitt and Noor Jawad assisted very ably with planning the educationally oriented groups described in Section 4 of the report, and they brought their considerable skills in focus-group management to the task of co-facilitating the groups. As always, program assistant Mary Heller kept a watchful eye over everything and made sure she had thought of what we might need well before we did. Finally, our thanks to Bureau and private agency workers and supervisors for taking time from their demanding jobs to participate in focus groups and complete the survey. Our results show clearly the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices these dedicated professionals make on behalf of children and families in Milwaukee County. We are all better off from the work they do.

DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

1 WEST WILSON STREET
P O BOX 8916
MADISON WI 53708-8916

Jim Doyle
Governor

Helene Nelson
Secretary

State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

Telephone: 608-267-3905
FAX: 608-266-6836
dhfs.wisconsin.gov

Date: October 13, 2005

To: All Interested Parties

From: Burnie Bridge, Administrator
Division of Children and Family Services

RE: Workforce Recruitment and Retention Report for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

As outlined in the Governor's KidsFirst Agenda, issued in Spring 2004, Governor Doyle and the Department of Health and Family Services/Division of Children and Family Services are committed to improving the child welfare system in Milwaukee County and statewide. Child welfare staff members are the backbone of this system. It is vitally important that the right people are chosen for this work and that they have the support and resources necessary to be effective.

We are mindful that staff turnover is a persistent problem among child welfare agencies through the country. Consistency and continuity of case managers are important factors in achieving positive outcomes for children and families. Because turnover interferes with the continuity of professional involvement between case managers and the children and families they serve, the quality of service they provide is diminished.

These concerns were a driving force behind the Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services' request to have the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and the Child Welfare League of American (CWLA) take a critical and comprehensive look at the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare to help improve recruitment and retention of culturally competent child welfare staff.

This report is part of an overall plan to address this workforce challenge. The Division of Children and Family Services has already implemented a compensation plan based on the research and recommendations from this report, as well as a prior report prepared in January 2005 by Flower, McDonald, Sumski, Review of Turnover in Milwaukee County Private Agency Child Welfare And Ongoing Case Management Staff. On July 22, 2005, Secretary Helene Nelson announced that the Department of Health and Family Services identified one-time funds to support an increase in salaries for ongoing case managers in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare following an unsuccessful attempt to secure funding for these efforts on an ongoing basis. The salary increase was a first step in bringing private agency ongoing case managers into a comparable pay scale with BMCW state social workers. The salary increases were a critical step. As the CWLA states, "when salary discrepancies become too large, compensation does become a critical, perhaps even overriding, issue" in recruitment and retention. On July 25th, Governor Doyle signed a budget that included funding for additional increases and training for ongoing case managers.

Working together with the Partnership Council, the Division of Children and Family Services is currently developing and incorporating additional strategies, based on the array of recommendations in this and prior reports, to better support our caseworkers in order to better support our children and families. This will include career ladders, additional support through increased mentoring and on-the-job training, and other recruitment and retention initiatives developed in collaboration with our private agency partners.

Research Team

Steven L. McMurtry, Ph.D., is a professor of social work in the Helen Bader School of School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His research interests are in child welfare services, especially out-of-home care, and in methods of assessment of service outcomes. Together with other colleagues he is completing a multi-year evaluation of services in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and he also co-directs the Child Welfare Training Project in the School.

Susan J. Rose, Ph.D., is associate professor of social work in the Helen Bader School of School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research interests are in child welfare and substance use. She has just completed a five year evaluation of substance abuse services for TANF-eligible women in Milwaukee County, and is currently Co-Investigator in a project developing a skill-based intervention for substance abusing women of child bearing age at risk for HIV. She co-directs the Child Welfare Training Project at the School with Prof. McMurtry.

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph.D., is the Associate Director of the Walker Trieschman Center, the consulting and professional development division of the Child Welfare League of America. For the past several years he has led CWLA's workforce initiative, providing consultation and training to both public and private agencies across the country to help them improve their efforts to recruit and retain quality staff. Dr. Reitz also consults widely in schools and residential centers, helping them to provide effective clinical interventions with children who have serious emotional and behavioral problems.

Floyd Alwon, Ed.D., serves as the director of the Walker Trieschman Center and acting vice-president for the Child Welfare League of America. The Trieschman Center helps organizations enhance the competence of their workforce and supports communities and systems in their efforts to improve practice. He has 35 years experience in child welfare, special education, and mental health settings including serving as a child care worker, supervisor and director of a residential, day treatment and community-based program. He also has extensive experience as a trainer, consultant, writer, and teacher.

Susan Mayer, Ph.D., is a Senior Researcher at Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago and holds a Research Associate appointment at the University. Her work at Chapin Hall has included several projects for the state child welfare agency in Illinois; this work is ongoing. She also directed the Center's Residential Education Project and conducted an exploratory study of education options for court-involved youth. Her research interests include factors influencing the delivery of human services and their impact on recipients, social welfare policy, and the politics of systemic reform.

Overview of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare: Structure and Operations

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare is the state agency mandated by statute to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect in Milwaukee County, to ensure the protection of children at risk of maltreatment, and to provide services to children and families. The Bureau performs public child welfare functions within the State of Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services and contracts with private agencies in order to provide many of the child welfare services in Milwaukee County.

The Bureau uses public/private partnerships in a decentralized case management services model delivered from five service sites located around the county. Steps are in progress to reconfigure these five service territories into three, with the boundaries redrawn to balance workload, better conform to recognized neighborhood boundaries, and more closely align (where possible) with W-2 region boundaries**.**

Some of the Bureau's services are provided by personnel who work directly for it and are state employees. Other services are provided by employees of the "partner agencies" selected through a competitive bidding process. Staff who comprised the target population for this study provide the following services:

Intake and Initial Assessment. Staff in these areas receive and process allegations of child maltreatment, investigate the allegations, and determine whether the cases require referral for further services. Also in this group are staff in the Crisis Response Team (CRT) which is a supplement to phone intake designed to handle emergency referrals. A final service component in this category is Families in Need of Supportive Services (FISS). which provides assessment and intervention services for adolescents and their families to assist them in avoiding unnecessary juvenile court involvement. All staff involved in Intake, Initial Assessment (IA), CRT, and FISS are employees of the state.

Safety Services. These are services provided to families in which an investigation has found some risk to one or more children but at a level too low to warrant placement in out-of-home care. Intensive, in-home services are provided are intended to reduce problems that led to the safety concerns and maximize the likelihood that children will be able to remain in the home safely. At present, all staff in this area are employees of Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP) or La Causa, both of which are Bureau partner agencies.

Ongoing Services. Staff in this area provide case-management services to children (and the families of these children) who have been placed in out-of-home care. Among the service functions included are are family-centered assessment, case planning, service procurement, coordination and monitoring, court appearances, and other such activities. The goal of Ongoing Services is to bring children as quickly as possible to a safe and supportive permanent home, either through reunification, placement with family, or

adoption. This is the largest service area in the Bureau in terms of numbers of personnel and the one most affected by turnover problems. All staff in this area are employees of CFCP or La Causa.

Out-of-Home Care and Licensing. Services in this program are provided under contract by staff in the First Choices for Children Program of Lutheran Social Services (LSS). The primary components of these services are recruitment, training, support, and licensing of foster families, and authorizing and placement of children in foster homes, shelters, group homes, treatment foster care homes, and residential care centers.

Adoption. This services area involves recruitment, training, support, and licensing of adoptive families and supervision of adoptive placements. All staff are employed by Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), a Bureau partner agency.

For purposes of reference for the remainder of this report, the services, sites, and providers that comprise the Bureau are as follows:

Service	Location	Agency/Employer
Phone Intake/Crisis Response Team (CRT)/ Family Intervention Support Services (FISS)	Sites 1-5	BMCW
Initial Assessment	Sites 1-5	BMCW
Safety Services	Sites 1, 2, 3, 5	Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP)
	Site 4	La Causa
Ongoing Services	Sites 1, 2, 3, 5	CFCP
	Site 4	La Causa
Out-of-Home Care	Sites 1-5	Lutheran Social Services, First Choice for Children (FCFC)
Adoption	Sites 1-5	Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

Definition of Terms

In this summary and in the body of the text, when we refer to "the Bureau" we mean all of the service elements described above, whether they involve state-employees or private organizations. We may also use the phrase "the Bureau and its partner agencies" to make clear that we mean the entire operation. It is also important to note that the child welfare functions covered by the Bureau and its partner agencies are but one part of a larger child welfare system in Milwaukee county, and that this system includes many other organizations.

When contrasting particular service areas within the Bureau, such as those staffed by state employees versus those carried out by private-agency staff, we will identify those service areas specifically. Note that the term "Bureau staff" is sometimes used by employees or community members to refer specifically to state workers in Intake or Initial Assessment. In this report, unless specifically stated otherwise, "Bureau staff" will refer to all professional-level personnel in the Bureau and its partner agencies. We will use the term "worker" to refer to those professional staff whose main responsibility is to provide case management and/or direct services to Bureau clients, regardless of whether their formal designation is "case manager" (as in Ongoing services) or "direct service staff" (as in other areas).

Executive Summary

Background

The purpose of this study was to assist the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and its parent agency, the Division of Children and Family Services of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services in identifying factors contributing to high turnover rates within the Bureau and its partner agencies. High turnover did not affect all parts of the Bureau, but by 2004 it had become acute in Ongoing Services, which accounts for just under half of all Bureau staff and is the service area responsible for providing case management services to children in out-of-home care and their families. Based on calculations using formulas recommended in this report, annual turnover rates in Ongoing (as it is referred to henceforth) ranged from 33% to 90% by site in 2004, with two-year-average rates ranging from 38% to 70%.

It should be noted that the goal of both the survey and focus groups described here was to gain information on causes of staff turnover. As such, there was a greater emphasis on what staff perceived as problems within the organization than on what was working well. This might in turn lead to a negative overall impression of the Bureau as an organization, but that would be an incorrect interpretation of our findings. The focus of this study was on the narrow issue of turnover problems, their causes, and potential solutions to them. It was not intended and should not be construed as an evaluation of the Bureau as a whole.

Method

Data were collected between December 2004 and May 2005 using a combination of administrative data sources, focus groups, interviews, and web-based and mailed surveys. Research team members from the Child Welfare League of America collected information on turnover from personnel records of the Bureau and its partner agencies. They also collected salary data from Bureau records, vendor organizations, and child welfare agencies in surrounding counties. On issues relating to turnover and job satisfaction they conducted focus groups with workers and supervisors and interviews with administrators at all agencies. Team members at UWM collected data through a web-based and mailed survey of all Bureau workers and supervisors. UWM and University of Chicago staff also conducted focus groups with current and former workers and supervisors on educational goals and needs of staff.

Results

Compensation: Significant salary disparities exist both within the Bureau and between Bureau staff and those in surrounding counties. The average salary for ongoing case managers and safety services workers is $31,366, for out-of-home care and adoption workers it is $34,281, and for state workers it is $39,640. State staff, on average, are thus paid 16% more than out-of-home care and adoption workers and 26% more than ongoing and safety services workers. The same pattern holds for supervisors, though the

differences between groups are slightly smaller. Disparities in benefits also follow this pattern. Part of the salary difference is due to the fact that high turnover in Ongoing means its staff has lower average job tenure and thus lower salaries, but pay scales reveal basic structural differences between state staff and others. Substantial salary differences were also found between Bureau workers and supervisors and their counterparts in surrounding counties. On average, workers in the four nearby counties studied earn 41% more than those in the Bureau, while supervisors in those counties earn an average of 45% more. About half this difference appears to structural and about half appears due to higher turnover rates in the Bureau.

Staff are aware of these differences, and as expected, those with the lowest salaries (including Ongoing staff) were significantly more dissatisfied with their salary than were others, and they considered it a major factor in turnover. In fact, in the survey, the top reason cited by worker-level staff for why they might leave their job was low salary. In focus groups, many spoke of the conflict between being committed to work they consider important and difficulties they faced in making ends meet. Taking second jobs and living with parents or relatives were common ways of coping with the problem, which was seen as being compounded by poor benefits, lack of overtime pay, and low recent raises.

In multivariate analyses, dissatisfaction with pay was not found to be directly predictive of overall job satisfaction or intent to quit, but it is likely that its effect takes place indirectly by influencing other factors associated with job satisfaction and intent to quit. For example organizational commitment was highly predictive of both job satisfaction and turnover, and dissatisfaction with pay may seriously undermine organizational commitment. Because other actions recommended in the report may be ineffective until compensation problems are addressed, the research team recommends that the first actions taken to respond to this report involve steps to correct the salary disparities described above. Specifically, we recommend that the base or starting salary for all private agency Bureau workers be raised to $31,825, the current base for Bureau state workers. This would equalize starting salaries across Bureau staff, as well as reduce the discrepancy between Bureau workers and similar staff in surrounding counties. We also recommend that a stepped salary system, similar to the one described in an earlier report by Flowers, McDonald, and Sumski (2005), be implemented and that an attempt be made to make benefit packages more uniform across the range of Bureau workers.

Job Demands: Survey results show that both workers and supervisors typically spend more than 40 hours per week keeping up with job demands, and almost a quarter of Ongoing workers report spending more than 50 hours per week. The Bureau appears to have made significant strides in keeping caseload sizes in check, and it has consistently met case-per-worker standards. However, this progress can be undermined by the constant occurrence of vacancies resulting from high turnover rates. These create temporary but stress-inducing spikes in work responsibilities as staff cover cases of those who have left until new personnel can be hired and trained. Perhaps because of this, 80% of survey respondents reported that job demands seem to keep increasing. Most also scored well above the norm on a standardized measure of workload and below the norm

on a measure of perceived control over their work. Due to an apparent desire not to let down others in their group, however, absenteeism remains mostly low, and it was significantly lower in Ongoing than in other services. More experienced workers report being better able to manage job demands, including disruptions caused by turnover, but the difficulty comes in retaining workers long enough to gain this experience.

Record keeping appears to be an important factor in workload, with more than two-thirds of workers reporting that they spend half or more of their time on paperwork and documentation tasks. By comparison, only 15% of Ongoing workers report spending half or more of their time in direct contact with clients. Most felt there was duplicative and unnecessary paperwork that could be reduced, and most also felt that their work could be reorganized to make things easier and more efficient. "Paperwork" is often a poorly defined term, and because the recording and transmission of vital case information is a basic part of all professional practice there is a limit to how much it can be reduced. On the other hand, professional organizations must work constantly to keep the proliferation of forms and documents in check and ensure that duplication is minimized. We recommend the Bureau and its partner agencies constitute a work-efficiency group to more efficiently structure organizational operations and information management. The tasks of the group would include identifying and eliminating duplication, redesigning forms, exploring portable devices and paperless technologies, and examining current work-distribution systems and division of labor.

Staff Morale: Results from the survey and focus groups reveal both strengths and problems regarding staff morale. Among strengths was the fact that most staff reported being committed to child welfare as an area of practice, found satisfaction in the nature of the work, viewed it as rewarding, liked the challenges it presents, and did not resort to absenteeism to express dissatisfaction with their jobs. Most also considered themselves to be professionals, believed they have opportunities to exercise professional judgment in their work and, within the constraints of the system, sought more opportunity to do so. Finally, most reported having positive relationships with their co-workers and, especially in Ongoing services, with their supervisors.

With regard to problems in the area of morale, staff in most services were below the norm for overall job satisfaction, and personnel in Ongoing services and Phone Intake were significantly below those in other service areas. Variations such as these tended to be found across service areas rather than across sites. Sources of dissatisfaction involved factors such as insufficient pay and opportunities for promotion, not feeling that administrators listen to them, and feeling underappreciated by the Bureau, its partners, the courts, clients, and the community. Many staff, especially those in Ongoing, showed elevated levels of both aspects of burnout measured--emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of clients. Ongoing workers also had excessively low organizational commitment scores, were more likely than others to say that their job was more difficult than expected, and were more likely to feel that they operated in a constant state of crisis.

We recommend several steps to address these concerns, including the development and implementation of new workload formulas to ensure equity across staff members within

Ongoing Services, such as by considering number of children or case difficulty when making assignments and evaluating workload. It may also be appropriate to review the distribution of resources and personnel across service areas to determine if some reallocation to Ongoing Services from other areas is warranted. Additional recommendations include expanding mentor positions as a means for providing additional support for new workers and increasing efforts to recognize and reward staff for quality performance.

Characteristics of Staff and Implications for Recruitment: Two key factors analyzed in results from staff surveys were overall job satisfaction and turnover risk measured by frequency of thoughts of quitting. Descriptive factors such as age, race/ethnicity, or gender did not predict scores on either of these variables. Also having no effect were personality characteristics such as psychological hardiness, sense of personal well-being, and need for order and structure. Finally, in accord with previous research, the results indicated that even variables such as education or child welfare competency are not predictive of job satisfaction or turnover, though they may influence service quality. This suggests that there is no "profile" of personal or demographic characteristics (such as race, age, gender, or personality traits) to which the Bureau or its partner agencies should refer in recruiting or hiring new staff. Ensuring understanding of the nature of the work, such as by creating a job preview video to show to new applicants, may be useful. The Bureau should also continue its efforts to recruit attractive job candidates, and a plan for doing so is outlined in Appendix C. Overall, however, it appears that a diversity of individuals have the potential to succeed in Bureau employment, and the important issue with respect to preventing turnover is not who they are when they apply but what happens to them after they accept employment.

Training: Results relating to training were mixed. Both survey respondents and focus group participants felt that many improvements could be made in training, and in the survey most disagreed that new worker training had prepared them for their jobs. On the other hand, many survey respondents believed they knew enough to do their jobs well and viewed their jobs as the type that could only be learned by doing. Some consistent themes were that useful training content was not always provided when it was needed, that training for more experienced staff often lacked depth or relevance, and that more specialized content for particular services areas is needed. It is also noteworthy that worker-level staff outside of Ongoing Services more strongly agreed that training was inadequate than those in Ongoing. As is noted below, we recommend the establishment of a special group charged with improving both training curricula and professional development opportunities. We also note that both our results and prior research do not indicate that training per se is a critical factor in predicting job satisfaction or intent to quit. As a result, training should be considered an important element in preparing workers to provide quality services, but solutions to the problem of turnover are unlikely to rest in training alone.

Staff Development and Advancement Opportunities: Both survey and focus group results reveal much dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities and with its perceived lack of orientation to professional development. Workers noted that pay increments for

promotion to supervisor or for earning a Masters degree are too small to provide a worthwhile incentive, and workers and supervisors alike call attention to the absence of a meaningful career ladder for staff in the Bureau and its partner agencies. Many workers also expressed a desire to move into advanced practice positions as an alternative or interim step to supervision, but few positions are available. We recommend a stepped salary system that would provide the basic structure for a clearer advancement track for staff. It should include entry and advanced worker-level positions, the expansion of mentor positions and other options for more experienced staff, and better monetary incentives for earning desired advanced degrees. Similarly, steps to nurture the professionalism of staff and to promote continuing education and the attainment of advanced credentials would be useful, especially for experienced staff, who viewed promotional opportunities and professional development as issues of particular importance.

Supervision: Overall, workers gave high ratings to their supervisors. Ratings of quality of supervision were about average in services other than Ongoing and above average in Ongoing, with the most frequent negative comment being that advice from different supervisors was often conflicting. Research suggests that a supportive supervisory relationship can be an important tool for ameliorating emotional exhaustion and promoting organizational commitment. However, supervisors noted that they struggle with maintaining a proper balance between their role of providing support and promoting professional development for their staff and their role in insisting on compliance with service mandates. Most felt that the emphasis in the organization had shifted too heavily toward compliance. We recommend that efforts be made to assist supervisors in achieving a more equal balance between these demands.

Educational Opportunities: For several years the Bureau has had a partnership with UWM that provides a monthly stipend and tuition to employees who enroll full-time to complete the MSW degree. In spring 2005, the partnership was extended to include evening classes from the first year of the MSW curriculum that were offered to all staff and held at Bureau sites. Results from the focus groups and surveys indicate that a majority of participants who don't already hold the MSW degree would like to earn it. However, despite the stipend and tuition, many staff see the current program at UWM as unaffordable because they cannot meet their financial obligations over 15 to 24 months (the duration of the program) on the stipend alone. Others were deterred by the month-for-month work commitment to the Bureau that is required of all full-time participants. Still others again noted that salary and advancement incentives for completing the MSW are low, there are risks of loss of seniority if they leave to take part in the program, and there is little flexibility in current work arrangements that would allow them to pursue the MSW degree part-time. Perhaps as a result, considerable interest was expressed in the development of a part-time program that would allow staff to remain in their jobs while taking courses more gradually over time and that would also allow them to drop to part-time work for the period needed to complete their required student internship. We recommend further planning toward the creation of a part-time MSW option for staff.

Job Satisfaction and Turnover: The most accurate picture of how different factors contribute to job satisfaction and intent to quit are provided by multivariate analyses in which many factors can be tested at once. In doing so, it should be noted that job satisfaction and intent to quit, while closely involved with turnover, are not the same variables as turnover itself, which we were not able to measure directly because of the time limitations of the study. Results of the multivariate analyses employed here indicated that the factors which significantly predicted job satisfaction and intent to quit were ones having to do with the workplace itself. Organizational commitment was the most powerful predictor of both variables; staff members who felt committed to their respective organizations were more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to think of leaving. Staff who scored high on "emotional exhaustion" as a measure of worker burnout were also much less likely to be satisfied with their jobs and had a much higher expressed intent to quit than others. Also important was the degree to which staff found the nature of the work intrinsically rewarding. Those who did had higher job satisfaction and fewer thoughts of quitting. Intent to quit was also higher for those having trouble coping with the level of job demands, those who reported poor working conditions as a reason why they might quit, and those working in Phone Intake and/or the Crisis Response Team. Job satisfaction was lower for those who felt overloaded by work, those who viewed their opportunities for promotion as poor, and those who felt their commitment to the job had ebbed over time. Being in Safety Services as compared to Ongoing services was also predictive of higher job satisfaction.

Results indicate that, while commitment to child welfare is high, commitment to the Bureau and its partners agencies is low. At least one reason for this is that the Bureau and its partners are seen as not being committed to their staff and so focused on compliance that they ignore other important considerations. This focus arises from, among other sources, federal regulations imposed by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and court mandates specified in the 2002 settlement agreement with Children's Rights. This focus can have the effect of shifting the organization's attention from overall service effectiveness to narrow concerns of avoiding sanctions arising from compliance failures. It can also diminish staff commitment and reduce their ability to find rewards in the nature of the work, both of which are associated with turnover.

We recommend that the Bureau reexamine its organizational environment in all its various components and develop a plan to enhance factors such as organizational commitment and the ability to find the work rewarding. One important way to do so would be to reorient itself away from relatively narrow compliance concerns toward a broader quality-focused model. Recent literature on quality-oriented management emphasizes maximum participation by line- and supervisory staff and encourages team-building and supportive supervision. Available research suggests these are the same approaches that work best for increasing organizational commitment and overall job satisfaction. They can also help prevent or moderate emotional exhaustion. Finally, we recommend that in the course of implementing these steps the Bureau and its partner agencies review carefully those that can be achieved quickly and those that will require more time. Undertaking and achieving modest initial objectives will lay the groundwork for tackling more difficult objectives subsequently.

Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations are detailed at greater length in the final section of the report. We recognize that the list is lengthy and that it may be difficult and possibly counterproductive to attempt them all at once. Progress resulting from successful implementation of one recommendation may also diminish the need for another, and some that are listed as discrete steps may be more effectively carried out as elements within a broader set of initiatives. Finally, steps such as attempting to correct salary disparities may be more urgent than others. In making these recommendations, therefore, we assume that they will be undertaken as part of a process implemented by the Bureau to examine the results of the report as a whole and to formulate a coordinated plan to address them.

Compensation

1. Reduce compensation disparities among staff within the Bureau and its partner agencies and between these staff and others in comparable positions in surrounding counties.
2. Ensure regular and meaningful salary increases for workers, particularly during their first few years of employment.

Advancement and Staff Development

3. Develop a career ladder that provides opportunities for professional and salary enhancement for staff who stay with the system.
4. Provide additional support to new workers through increased mentoring.
5. Expand professional development opportunities for more experienced workers.
6. Improve staff recognition procedures.
7. Refine and refocus training curricula.

Reducing Emotional Exhaustion and Burnout

8. Refine workload formulas and review allocation of personnel.
9. Streamline job tasks, especially paperwork and documentation.
10. Develop and reward constructive team culture.
11. Mitigate “compliance-driven” work environments and foster organizational commitment.
12. Encourage supportive supervision and assist supervisors in creating supportive team environments.

Implementation Process

13. Tailor standardization across partner agencies to specific needs and circumstances.
14. Make achievable gains first.

Part 1

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare Salary Report:

Workers and Supervisors

Prepared by

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph,D.
Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

Method

All the salary and benefit data used in this analysis were collected directly from the agencies providing the services. Data for the Bureau and its partner agencies employees were collected from the State of Wisconsin, La Causa, Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP), Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) and Lutheran Social Services, First Choice for Children (FCFC). Each agency was asked to provide salary and benefit data for its employees (worker-level staff and supervisors) effective January 15, 2005 (or the nearest payroll period to that date). It should be noted that CFCP implemented a retroactive salary adjustment for many of its employees after the first set of numbers were submitted. This "equity" adjustment was made as a result of the merger of sites three and five into their organization. The initial, pre-adjustment, figures are included in Table 1 (labeled "prior to merger-related salary adjustment") and are used only for the analyses comparing salary levels and turnover, as these figures are more reflective of the salaries paid during the periods for which turnover data are available (2003 and 2004). The revised figures are included in Table 2 (labeled "following merger-related salary adjustments") and are used for all other analyses, as they are more reflective of the current salary status of workers in the system.

Data were collected on the following numbers and categories of workers:

Worker-Level Staff		
Ongoing Case Managers	205	
Mentors	9	
Safety Service Workers	32	
Out-of-Home Care Licensing		55
Adoption Workers	33	
State Workers (Intake & Initial Assessment)	92	
TOTAL Worker-Level		426

Table 1: Salary Comparisons – January 2005 – Prior to Merger-Related Adjustments

	Salary Range		Staff N	Actual Salaries			
	Minimum	**Maximum**		**Mean**	**Median**	**Low**	**High**
Worker-Level Staff							
Ongoing Case Mgmt							
Site 1	27,789	41,683	48	31,671	30,942	27,907	41,844
Site 2	27,789	41,683	41	30,600	30,172	27,907	41,428
Site 3	27,789	41,683	42	29,997	29,799	27,907	34,222
Site 4	30,171	38,171	41	32,859	31,971	30,172	39,187
Site 5	27,789	41,683	40	29,398	28,409	27,907	35,475
Overall	27,789	41,683	212	**30,933**	30,684	27,907	41,844
Mentors	27,789	41,683	9	**35,262**	32,970	32,573	43,702
Safety Services							
Site 1	27,789	41,683	6	30,613	30,313	28,108	33,742
Site 2	27,789	41,683	10	29,730	29,714	28,104	31,111
Site 3	27,789	41,683	10	30,802	30,558	27,896	36,185
Site 4	26,395	34,395	5	31,560	30,791	29,311	35,769
Overall	26,395	41,683	31	**30,542**	30,109	27,896	36,185
Out-of-Home Care Licensing	30,000	39,883	55	**34,186**	34,403	30,900	40,515
Adoption Workers	27,789	41,683	33	**34,438**	34,611	28,974	39,021
State Workers	31,825	56,069	92	**39,640**	39,141	32,243	47,011
Supervisors							
Ongoing Case Mgmt							
Site 1	37,648	56,472	8	42,754	43,379	38,336	47,565
Site 2	37,648	56,472	7	41,434	42,428	36,640	46,688
Site 3	37,648	56,472	8	39,899	38,461	37,644	49,047
Site 4	37,816	49,516	5	44,598	42,234	40,171	54,193
Site 5	37,648	56,472	7	39,640	38,648	37,644	43,917
Overall	37,648	56,472	35	**41,478**	40,655	36,640	54,193
Safety Services	37,648	56,472	5	**39,672**	39,547	39,150	40,152
Out-of-Home Care Licensing	40,000	58,564	8	**46,560**	45,621	41,198	53,550
Adoptions	37,648	56,472	5	**49,899**	50,523	44,117	54,850
State Workers	41,136	86,596	17	**51,507**	48,358	42,664	67,025

Table 2: Salary Comparisons – January 2005 – After Merger-Related Adjustments

	Salary Range			Actual Salaries			
	Minimum	**Maximum**	**Staff N**	**Mean**	**Median**	**Low**	**High**
Worker-Level Staff							
Ongoing Case Mgmt							
Site 1	27,789	41,683	47	31,741	31,119	27,907	41,844
Site 2	27,789	41,683	41	30,679	30,364	27,907	41,593
Site 3	27,789	41,683	41	30,626	30,109	27,907	38,443
Site 4	30,171	38,171	41	32,859	31,971	30,172	39,187
Site 5	27,789	41,683	35	30,109	29,799	27,907	37,713
Overall	27,789	41,683	205	**31,251**	30,714	27,907	41,844
Mentors	27,789	41,683	9	**35,697**	34,633	32,573	43,702
Safety Services							
Site 1	27,789	41,683	6	31,547	30,447	28,108	38,540
Site 2	27,789	41,683	11	30,192	29,814	28,104	34,222
Site 3	27,789	41,683	10	30,920	30,972	27,896	36,185
Site 4	26,395	34,395	5	31,560	30,791	29,311	35,769
Overall	26,395	41,683	32	**30,887**	30,308	27,896	38,540
Out-of-Home Care Licensing	30,000	39,883	55	**34,186**	34,403	30,900	40,515
Adoption Workers	27,789	41,683	33	**34,438**	34,611	28,974	39,021
State Workers	31,825	56,069	92	**39,640**	39,141	32,243	47,011
Supervisors							
Ongoing Case Mgmt							
Site 1	37,648	56,472	8	43,436	43,379	38,884	49,464
Site 2	37,648	56,472	7	42,095	42,428	38,119	46,688
Site 3	37,648	56,472	7	40,623	39,370	37,647	49,047
Site 4	37,816	49,516	5	44,598	42,234	40,171	54,193
Site 5	37,648	56,472	6	40,103	39,945	37,886	43,917
Overall	37,648	56,472	33	**42,125**	40,737	37,647	54,193
Safety Services	37,648	56,472	5	**39,730**	39,837	39,150	40,152
Out-of-Home Care Licensing	40,000	58,564	8	**46,560**	45,621	41,198	53,550
Adoptions	37,648	56,472	5	**49,899**	50,523	44,117	54,850
State Workers	41,136	86,596	17	**51,507**	48,358	42,664	67,025

BMCW Results

Ongoing Case Managers

As shown in Table 2, the average salary for ongoing case managers across all five sites is $31,251, with a range from $27,907 to $41,844. The site averages range from $30,109 (Site 5) to $32,859 (Site 4). The average salary is slightly higher than the salary for safety service workers, but considerably lower (by about $3,000) than the average for the other private agency workers (i.e., Out-of-Home Care and adoptions), and much lower than the average for the state workers (by over $8,000).

The salary range for CFCP sites is $27,789 to $41,683. The salary range for Site 4 is $30,171 to $38,171, considerably higher at the entry level but lower at the top end. Individual salaries cover the entire range, but cluster close to the bottom, as few workers stay long enough to reach the higher levels. Further evidence of this clustering near the bottom is that the median salary is lower than the mean at each of the five sites.

Mentors

The average salary for mentors is $35,697, with a range from $32,573 to $43,702. This includes mentors from Sites 1, 2, 3, and 5 (Site 4 had no mentors at the time the data were collected). Since there are only 9 mentors in the system, the data are not separated by site. As expected, the average mentor salary falls between the average for ongoing case managers and supervisors.

There is no separate salary range for mentors at this point. All but one of the salaries falls within the range for ongoing case managers. As mentors are required to be experienced, skilled workers, one would expect that even the lowest mentor salary would be well above the entry level for case managers. That expectation is borne out by the fact that the lowest current mentor salary is over $32,500, significantly higher than the average ongoing case manager salary.

Safety Service Workers

The average salary for safety service workers is $30,887, with a range from $27,896 to $38,540. The site averages range from $30,192 (Site 2) to $31,560 (Site 4). This average salary is the lowest of all categories of workers evaluated, only slightly below the salary for ongoing case managers, but considerably lower than the average for the other private agency workers and much lower than the average for the state workers.

The salary range for CFCP sites (Sites 1, 2, and 3) is $27,789 to $41,683. The salary range for Site 4 is $26,395 to $34,395, somewhat lower than for the CFCP sites at entry and considerably lower at the top end. (Site 5 does not have its own safety service workers). Interestingly, in spite of the low salary range for Site 4, the average safety service worker salary there is the highest of all the sites.

No individual safety service worker salary approaches the top of the salary range. As with the ongoing case manager salaries, most individual safety service worker salaries cluster near the bottom of the range, as few workers stay long enough to reach the higher levels. Further evidence of this clustering near the bottom is that the median salary is lower than the mean at each site.

Out-of-Home Care Licensing Workers

The average salary for out-of-home care licensing workers is $34,186, with a range from $30,900 to $40,515. This average salary is very close to the salary for the adoption workers, considerably higher than the averages for both ongoing case managers and safety services workers, but still considerably lower than for the state workers.

The salary range for all licensing workers is $30,000 to $39,883. With the exception of Site 4 ongoing case managers, the starting salary is more than $2,000 higher than for ongoing and safety service workers. The maximum salary is somewhat lower than for those same workers, however.

Individual worker salaries cover the entire salary range and, unlike the ongoing and safety services workers, do not cluster at the bottom of the range. This indicates that more workers in this category remain with the agency long enough to move their way up through the salary levels. This is supported by the fact that the median salary is higher than the mean.

Adoption Workers

The average salary for adoption workers is $34,438, with a range from $28,974 to $39,021. This average salary is very close to the salary for the out-of-home care licensing workers, considerably higher than the averages for both ongoing case managers and safety service workers, but still considerably lower than for the state workers.

The salary range for all adoption workers is $27,789 to $41,683. These ranges are the same as those for all the CFCP direct-service workers.

Individual adoption worker salaries cover the entire salary range and, unlike the ongoing and safety services workers, do not cluster at the bottom of the range. This indicates that more workers in this category remain with the agency long enough to move their way up through the salary levels. This is supported by the fact that the median salary is higher than the mean.

State Workers

The average salary for all state workers is $39,640, with a range from $32,243 to $47,011. This average salary is considerably higher than for any other workers in the system, $5,000 higher than for out-of-home care and adoption workers, and over $8,000 higher than for ongoing and safety services workers.

The entry level salary range for state workers is from $31,825 to $47,947. The range for advanced workers is from $37,239 to $56,069. Most workers achieve advanced status at the end of their first year of employment, resulting in a large raise to the new base. At the time of this analysis, only 2 of the 92 state workers fell into the entry category. Thus, while the entry salary is not appreciably higher than for some of the other categories of workers in the system, the advanced worker salary range is markedly higher (by over $7,000 at the lower end and almost $15,000 at the upper end) than any other range in the system.

Individual worker salaries cluster around the $40,000 mark for nearly all workers in these categories. Nearly all variation is directly the result of duration of service with the Bureau.

Supervisors

The data for supervisor salaries reflect a similar pattern as those for worker-level staff. The safety services supervisor salaries are the lowest (average = $39,730), followed by ongoing services supervisors (average = $42,125), out-of-home care licensing supervisors (average = $46,560), adoption supervisors ($49,899), and state worker supervisors (average = $51,507). As is the case with workers, the Site 4 supervisors again have somewhat higher salaries when compared to the other sites.

The supervisor salary patterns differ from the worker data in three ways, however. First, there is more variation across the private agency providers. For example, the difference between the lowest and highest paid group of workers is about $4,500 ($30,109 for the Site 5 ongoing case managers versus $34,656 for initial out-of-home care licensing workers). That difference expands to more than $10,000 for supervisory positions ($39,730 for the safety services supervisors versus $49,899 for the adoption supervisors). Second, while the adoption and out-of-home care worker salaries are almost identical, the adoption supervisor salaries exceed the out-of-home care supervisor salaries by an average of more than $3,000. Finally, state supervisory salaries, while still considerably higher than the salaries for ongoing and safety service supervisors (approximately 25% higher), are not so widely disparate from the out-of-home care and adoption supervisory salaries. For example, state worker salaries are 15% higher than adoption direct worker salaries, while state supervisor salaries are only 3% higher than adoption supervisor salaries.

These variations should be interpreted cautiously, however, as there are a relatively small number of supervisors all together (n= 68), and some of the categories

have as few as five supervisors in them. With numbers this small, one or two workers with significant longevity can skew the results and make interpretation more difficult.

Benefits

The agencies providing services were also asked to report their expenditures related to benefits and payroll taxes for their employees (i.e., the direct personnel costs required to support a worker in their agency). These figures are reported as a percentage of salaries. The calculation is made by dividing the amount spent on employee benefits (e.g., insurance for health, dental, vision, and disability, as well as retirement) plus the amount spent on payroll taxes (e.g., social security, Medicare, worker's compensation, unemployment), and dividing by the total salary budget:

$$\frac{\text{Benefits + Payroll Taxes}}{\text{Total Salary}}$$

Each agency reported the average percentage figure for all its BMCW employees.

Children's Family and Community Partnerships		
(ongoing case managers, safety services, supervisors)	23%	
La Causa		
(ongoing case managers, safety services, supervisors)	23%	
Children's Services Society of Wisconsin		
(adoption workers and supervisors)	26%	
Lutheran Social Services		
(out-of-home care workers and supervisors)		39%
State Workers		
(initial assessment, intake, CRT, and supervisors)	41%	

The results follow the same general pattern as the overall salary figures. That is, benefits are lowest for workers who provide ongoing case management and safety services, higher for those providing adoption and out-of-home care services, and highest for the state workers. The only significant difference from the pattern found in the salary analysis is that the benefit rate for out-of-home care workers and supervisors is considerably higher than the rate for adoption staff, and approaches the rate for state workers. In general, then, the low benefit rate simply exacerbates the already existing gulf between the salaries of the lower and higher paid workers.

Surrounding County Results

As previously noted, comparison salary data were collected from four counties surrounding Milwaukee County (see Table 3). We clearly recognize that these counties are different from Milwaukee in many ways and that the sample of workers for comparison in each group is quite small. As such, conclusions must be drawn carefully. However, given that these counties hire similarly trained people to do similar types of

Table 3: Salary Data from Surrounding Counties – April 2005

	Salary Range			Actual Salaries				Benefits	Turnover
	Minimum	**Maximum**	**Staff N**	**Mean**	**Median**	**Low**	**High**		
Worker-Level Staff									
Kenosha County								46%	
Ongoing Case Managers	36,358	60,403	11	51,773	51,563	45,323	60,403		0%
Initial Assess/Intake	36,358	60,403	6	51,891	53,523	44,824	56,992		0%
Contracted Safety Service	Unknown	Unknown	13	28,865	29,250	24,847	40,600		Unknown
Contracted Out-of-Home Care	Unknown	Unknown	4	27,593	27,403	24,506	31,059		
Ozaukee County								46%	
Ongoing Case Managers	44,057	52,388	3	52,388	52,388	52,388	52,388		0%
Initial Assess/Intake	44,057	52,388	3	49,611	52,388	44,057	52,388		67%
Racine County								44%	
Ongoing Case Managers	33,842	55,806	14	44,512	44,824	33,842	55,806		21%
Initial Assess/Intake	33,842	55,806	13	49,254	51,625	40,290	55,806		8%
Out-of-Home Care Licensing	33,842	55,806	3	48,128	50,585	42,175	51,625		0%
Waukesha County								38%	
Ongoing Case Managers	34,631	48,345	13	46,216	48,345	34,631	48,345		8%
Safety Service Workers	34,631	48,345	11	47,664	48,345	43,002	51.321		0%
Initial Assess/Intake	34,631	48,345	13	43,275	44,855	34,631	48,345		24%
Total Worker Level	33,842	60,403	90	47,583	Unknown	33,842	60,403		11%
Supervisors									
Counties Combined	44,300	73,999	11	65,624	Unknown	54,317	73,999		0%
Contracted Staff	Unknown	Unknown	4	42,301	40,810	35,000	52,586		Unknown

work within a fairly small geographic area, we believe that they provide meaningful data that can be used to better understand the causes of turnover on the part of workers in the Bureau and its partner agencies.

Ongoing Case Managers

The salary ranges for ongoing case managers for the four selected counties are quite variable. The minimum starting salary is similar in Racine, Waukesha, and Kenosha Counties (from $33,842 to $36,358), but is considerably higher ($44,057) in Ozaukee County. The maximum salaries vary even more widely, with a range from $48,345 in Waukesha County to $60,403 in Kenosha County. The lowest starting salary in these four counties is more than $6,000 higher than the starting salary for ongoing case managers at four of the BMCW sites. Similarly, the lowest maximum salary in these four counties is nearly $7,000 higher than the highest maximum salary for the BMCW sites.

Across all four counties, the average salary for the 41 workers in this category is $47,577, with a range from $33,842 to $60,403. Very few salaries are located near the bottom of the ranges, and several (including at least one in each county) have reached the maximum level. This average salary figure is more than $16,000 higher than the average salary for Ongoing case managers in the Bureau.

Safety Service Workers

Only one county, Waukesha, reported having county staff that provide safety services (N=11). The salary range for these workers is the same as for the county's ongoing case managers, $34,631 to $48,345, and the average salary is $47,664, slightly higher (by about $1,000) than the average for ongoing case managers. All these figures are significantly higher than the salaries earned by Safety Service workers in the Bureau (by amounts similar to those found for Ongoing case managers).

Kenosha County purchases safety services through a contractual arrangement and reported partial data for those workers (N=13). They were unable to report a salary range, but did indicate that their contracted safety service workers earned an average salary of $28,865, with a range from $24,847 to $40,600. Both the average and minimum starting salary are less than the figures reported for Safety Service workers in the Bureau (by about $2,000 in each case).

Out-of-Home Care Workers

Only Racine County provided data on county out-of-home care workers. Their salary range is the same as for other county worker-level staff. The average salary for out-of-home care workers is $48,182, with a range from $42,175 to $51,625. These figures are very similar to those for all other types of workers at the counties, and are considerably higher than the corresponding Bureau salaries.

Kenosha County purchases out-of-home care services through a contractual arrangement and reported partial data for those workers (N=4). They were unable to report the minimum-to-maximum salary range for this category of workers, but did report actual salaries for the current staff, who earned an average salary of $27,593, with a range from $24,506 to $31,059. Both the average and minimum starting salary are less than the figures reported for Bureau out-of-home care workers (by about $6,000 in each case).

Initial Assessment and Intake Workers

All four counties provided data for workers in this category (N=35). Their reported salary ranges are the same as for all other categories of county worker. The average salary for assessment and intake workers across all four counties was $47,516, with a range from $43,275 (Waukesha) to $51,891 (Kenosha). The average salary is very close to the other worker salaries in the four counties, almost $8,000 higher than the average state worker in the Bureau providing this service, and more than $16,000 higher than the average salary of other Bureau workers.

Supervisors

The four counties provided data for a total of 11 county supervisors. The salary ranges varied from $44,300 to $61,175 in Racine County to $54,685 to $73,999 in Ozaukee County. Even the lowest of these ranges is higher than the highest BMCW private agency range (by $3,000-$4,000). The supervisory salary range for BMCW state workers is also lower than the county supervisory ranges at the entry level, but is higher at the maximum level. The average salary for supervisors across all four counties was $65,624, with a range from $54,317 to $73,999. This is more than $14,000 higher than the average salary for BMCW state supervisors, the highest paid group of Bureau supervisors.

Kenosha County purchases safety and out-of-home care services through a contractual arrangement and reported partial data for the four staff who supervise those services. They were unable to report the minimum-to-maximum salary range for this category of workers, but did report actual salaries for the current staff, who earned an average salary of $42,301, with a range from $35,000 to $52,586. This average salary is almost identical to the average for Ongoing supervisors, slightly above the average for Safety Service supervisors, and below the averages for foster care, adoption, and Intake or Initial Assessment supervisors.

Benefits

The four surrounding counties also provided the same data on benefits as was provided by the Bureau's partner agencies. Three of the four counties provided varying benefit data across the different categories of workers. To enable better comparisons with data from the Bureau, (where a single average rate was calculated for each agency), the data provided by the counties was re-analyzed to provide a single average benefit rate for each county.

The average benefit rate for the four counties ranged from a low of 38% in Waukesha County, to 44% in Racine County, to 46% in Ozaukee and Kenosha Counties. All these benefit rates are considerably above the rates for workers at CFCP, LaCausa, and CSSW, and three of the four are also above the BMCW rates for LSS and state workers, the highest in the Bureau.

Relationship Between Salary and Turnover

The primary reason for reviewing salaries is to assess the extent to which they may be a contributing factor to the high rate of turnover being experienced, particularly in the ongoing case manger position. At this point, sufficient data (i.e., both salary and turnover) exist to make comparisons across the various sites where ongoing case management services are provided, as well as between ongoing case managers and workers in other services. Additional analyses across other staff are possible if reliable turnover data are made available.

Cross-Site Comparisons

Salary data for comparing ongoing case manager salaries at the five sites are taken from the initial January, 2005 salary chart (see Table 1). The site ranks in average salary from highest to lowest are as follows:

1. Site 4 ($32,859)
2. Site 1 ($31,671)
3. Site 2 ($30,600)
4. Site 3 ($29,997)
5. Site 5 ($29,398)

Turnover data are taken from the 2003 and 2004 Settlement Agreement Annual Reports. These data have been re-analyzed using the CWLA recommended formula for calculating turnover:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Annual Separations from the Position}}{\text{Average Number of Filled Positions at the Beginning of Each Month}}$$

Table 4 presents the turnover data for each site, both by quarter and annually. The relative rank (best/lowest to worst/highest) of the five sites on turnover is presented below for 2003, 2004, and for the two-year combined average.

	2003	2004	2-Year Average
1.	Site 1 (33%)	Site 3 (41%)	Site 3 (38%)
2.	Site 3 (35%)	Site 4 (48%)	Site 1 (42%)
3.	Site 4 (45%)	Site 1 (51%)	Site 4 (46%)
4.	Site 5 (49%)	Site 2 (66%)	Site 2 (61%)
5.	Site 2 (55%)	Site 5 (90%)	Site 5 (70%)

Table 4: Ongoing Case Manager Turnover Statistics Recalculated from Annual Settlement Agreement Reports

	Site 1				Site 2				Site 3				Site 4				Site 5				Total		
	OCM	# Left	Pct.		OCM	# Left	Pct.		OCM	# Left	Pct.		OCM	# Left	Pct.		OCM	# Left	Pct.		OCM	# Left	Pct.
2003																							
Q1	42.3	6	14.2%		40.7	7	17.2%		45.0	3	6.7%		47.3	10	21.1%		43.0	6	14.0%		218.3	32	14.7%
Q2	40.3	5	12.4%		37.7	4	10.6%		46.7	7	15.0%		50.7	1	2.0%		47.3	8	16.9%		222.7	25	11.2%
Q3	43.3	3	6.9%		42.0	6	14.3%		49.3	5	10.1%		51.0	7	13.7%		46.0	5	10.9%		231.7	26	11.2%
Q4	42.3	0	0.0%		40.3	5	12.4%		51.0	2	3.9%		46.7	4	8.6%		51.3	4	7.8%		231.7	15	6.5%
Total	42.1	14	33.3%		40.2	22	54.8%		48.0	17	35.4%		48.9	22	45.0%		46.9	23	49.0%		226.1	98	43.3%
2004																							
Q1	43.3	5	11.5%		40.3	6	14.9%		51.7	5	9.7%		44.0	4	9.1%		48.7	3	6.2%		228.0	26	11.4%
Q2	41.0	8	19.5%		41.7	10	24.0%		48.3	7	14.5%		41.3	7	16.9%		47.0	6	12.8%		219.3	37	16.9%
Q3	41.0	4	9.8%		41.7	4	9.6%		47.0	5	10.6%		46.3	4	8.6%		40.7	11	27.0%		216.7	28	12.9%
Q4	45.7	5	10.9%		40.3	7	17.4%		49.3	3	6.1%		42.7	6	14.1%		36.3	19	52.3%		214.3	40	18.7%
Total	42.8	22	51.4%		41.0	27	65.9%		49.1	20	40.7%		43.6	21	48.2%		43.2	39	90.3%		219.6	131	59.7%

Interpretation of Results

As the results show, the two sites with the highest average salaries (Sites 1 & 4) had the second and third lowest overall turnover rates. In addition, Site 5, with the lowest average salary, had the highest overall turnover rate. Both these findings suggest a relationship between salary level and turnover. However, Site 3, one of the two lowest paid sites, had the lowest turnover of all the sites. This would suggest that, at the very least, other job-related and organizational factors are also critically important variables that contribute to the incidence of turnover.

One must be careful, however, not to over-interpret this set of data. First, the sample is very small, only five sites and only two years of turnover data. Second, the turnover data are highly variable, with no site consistently at the top or bottom of the list over time. Third, the variation in salary across sites is fairly small. Even to the extent that salary is an important factor in causing turnover, such small differences in salary may not be large enough for the impact to be significant. Finally, such correlational data do not allow a determination of causality. That is, it is just as likely that the high turnover rates caused the lower salaries (i.e., new workers start at the bottom of the pay scale) as that the lower salaries caused the higher turnover.

Ongoing Case Manager/State Worker Comparisons

Data from the initial salary chart indicate that the average salary for ongoing case managers was $30,933, while the average salary for all state-employed workers was $39,640, a difference of over $8,500. The turnover statistics for 2003, 2004, and the two years combined are presented in the table below. Turnover data for the ongoing case managers is taken from the annual Settlement Agreement Reports. Turnover data for the state workers was obtained by extrapolating from personnel hire dates.

	2003	**2004**	**2-Year Average**
Ongoing Case Managers	43%	60%	52%
State Workers	10%	13%	11%

Clearly, these data show a correlation between salary level and turnover rate, with the state turnover rate being only a fraction of the rate for ongoing case managers. The data must be interpreted carefully, however, for all the reasons mentioned above, as well as because there are a great many dissimilarities between the two jobs that may actually be causing much of the variation in turnover rates.

BMCW/Surrounding County Comparisons

The four surrounding counties provided turnover data from 2004 for each category of county worker. (It should be noted that turnover figures for the contracted staff in Kenosha were not available). For the total of 90 workers, turnover during 2004 was 11%. Turnover was highest for initial assessment/intake workers (17%, N=35) and ongoing case

managers (10%, N=41). Turnover for both safety services (N=11) and out-of-home care (N=4) workers was 0%. The rates in Racine and Waukesha Counties, the largest of the counties reporting data, were very similar (11% and 13% respectively), while Kenosha had zero turnover among its 17 county staff. The rate in Ozaukee is inflated due to the small number of staff (one staff member retired and the replacement left before the year ended). None of the 11 supervisory positions turned over during 2004.

These turnover data are very similar to the data for state workers in the Bureau, and considerably lower than for ongoing case managers (see above). With the exception of Ozaukee, the counties with lower salary ranges and lower average salaries do have slightly elevated turnover rates. The sample is too small, however, to draw strong conclusions.

Summary of Major Findings

There are two major sets of findings supported by the data. The first relates to comparison of data across the various organizations and worker categories within the Bureau and its partner agencies. The second concerns comparisons of the overall Bureau data with that from the four surrounding counties.

Internal Bureau Comparisons

Analysis of the internal Bureau data suggests a three-tiered salary system, with the state workers at the top of the scale, the ongoing case managers and safety services workers at the bottom of the scale, and the out-of-home care and adoption workers in the middle. The data suggest that this three-tiered system exists for workers and for supervisors, for both salaries and benefits, and, given the available data, for turnover as well.

Comparing worker salaries across the three tiers yields the following results. The average salary for ongoing case managers and safety services workers (N=246) is $31,366, for out-of-home care and adoption workers (N=88) it is $34,281, and for state workers (N=92) it is $39,640. The average state worker salary is, thus, 16% higher than the average for out-of-home care and adoption workers, and 26% higher than for ongoing case managers and safety services workers.

The supervisory comparisons are as follows. The average salary for ongoing case manager and safety services supervisors (N=38) is $41,810, for out-of-home care and adoption supervisors (N=13) it is $47,844, and for state supervisors (N=17) it is $51,507. The average state supervisory salary is, thus, 8% higher than the average for out-of-home care and adoption supervisors, and 23% higher than for ongoing case managers and safety services supervisors.

For both workers and supervisors, the benefit percentages follow the same pattern. For ongoing case management and safety services staff, the average benefit percentage is 23%, for out-of-home care and adoption staff the average is 33% (range = 26% to 39%), and for state staff it is 41%.

The available turnover data follow a similar pattern. State worker turnover (11%) is considerably lower than turnover for ongoing case mangers (52%) and, though no hard data are available at this point, anecdotal reports indicate that the turnover for out-of-home care and adoption workers would again fall between those two figures.

Based on our analysis, this three-tiered system exists for two reasons, one based on differing salary structures across the various categories, and one based on other job factors that also contribute to high rates of turnover. The state salary structure is clearly significantly higher than the salary structure for workers in the Bureau's partner agencies. It starts higher, increases faster (especially during the first two years of employment), and allows for much higher maximum salaries for experienced workers. At least partly as a result of this salary differential, but also likely due to a number of other job-related factors, state workers also turn over less and stay longer. As a result, there are fewer state workers near the bottom of the range, which increases their average salaries even further.

The factors that discriminate out-of-home care and adoption staff salaries from those of the ongoing case managers and safety services staff do not appear related to structural differences in their compensation programs. The salary ranges for these various positions are quite similar, as are the processes for receiving salary increments. The only structural advantage favoring the out-of-home care and adoption staff is the advantage in benefits, which is likely not a major influence in retention for most workers. Rather, the differences in average salary across these classes of workers appears to be primarily the result of the fact that out-of-home care and adoption workers tend to turn over less and stay longer, so that fewer of them earn salaries at the bottom of the salary range. The "other" factors that presumably cause this phenomenon will be carefully studied using data from the survey and the focus groups.

Bureau Comparisons with Surrounding Counties

Analysis of the data from the surrounding counties indicates that their average salaries for all categories of worker are significantly higher than the salaries within the Bureau. The average salary for county workers (N=90) was 41% higher than the average salary for Bureau workers (N=426), $47,591 compared to $33,755. The average salary for county supervisors (N=11) was 45% higher than the average salary for Bureau supervisors (N=68), $65,624 compared to $45,388. The differences remain quite large, even when the county workers are compared only to the BMCW state workers, the highest paid category of worker within the Bureau.

The benefit and turnover data show a similar trend when comparisons are made across all Bureau workers. For these factors, however, the surrounding county data were not significantly better than those found for the BMCW state workers alone.

Interestingly, none of the surrounding counties showed any evidence of the tiered salary system observed within the Bureau. Each of the four counties had only one salary range for workers, one that encompassed all categories of worker or supervisor. The only

differences in average salary that arose across the various worker categories within a county were explainable as the result of differential turnover rates; that is, higher turnover results in lower average salaries, since newer workers tend to cluster near the bottom of the salary scale. Interestingly, there is also no systematic trend regarding which county positions had the highest turnover rates. In one county, the turnover rate was highest for ongoing case managers. In two others the turnover rate was higher for initial assessment and intake workers.

The large differences in salary between the surrounding counties and the Bureau appear to be the result of both differing salary structures and low turnover rates. The surrounding counties all had higher starting salaries than even the BMCW state workers. The difference was particularly large when comparing entry level salaries for ongoing case managers, where the lowest county salary range started at $33,842, compared to $27,789 for workers at CFCP (a 22% difference). But the generally low turnover rates reported by all the counties also contributes mightily to their higher average salaries. These low turnover rates result in significant numbers of county workers who have reached the top of their salary ranges, as well as mean and median salaries considerably higher than the entry-level salary. This is in contrast to workers in the Bureau and its partner agencies, where higher turnover rates result in few workers earning salaries near the top of their salary ranges and where mean and median salaries tend to cluster much nearer to the minimum starting salary.

Part 2

Review of Literature on Job Satisfaction and Turnover and Results of a Survey of Bureau Staff

Prepared by

Steven L. McMurtry, Ph,D.
Susan J. Rose, Ph.D.

Helen Bader School of Social Welfare
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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Background and Purpose

The primary purposes of this study were to explore individual and organizational characteristics that contribute to job dissatisfaction and resignation among workers and supervisors in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and its partner agencies, to identify educational aspirations of workers that if met could increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover, and to suggest recommendations for change based on the results.

Review of Relevant Literature

Recruiting and retaining qualified employees in child welfare has become one of the most significant challenges facing public and private providers of services to families and children. To the provider organizations and to the families served, the cost of worker turnover is significant. Child welfare organizations spend scarce dollars recruiting and training new employees, only to face the reality that between 30-60% of these workers will leave in a typical year. High turnover is also demoralizing for those employees who do not leave, creating a perception of increased burden, lack of commitment, and the devaluation of their work. For the families served, the costs are more difficult to determine, but no less real. Ending contact with a worker with whom a child may have formed a relationship can be difficult at best and re-traumatizing in the extreme.

Funders, administrators and researchers alike have begun to look more closely at the issue of turnover in child welfare, trying to identify factors that contribute to workers leaving their jobs. In the past 20 years, a number of studies have attempted to identify key factors in a worker's decision to leave. While the results of these studies have been mixed, attention has been narrowing to a consideration of both personal characteristics of workers and characteristics of the work or workplace itself.

Theoretically, turnover has been seen as a psychological, sociological and economic process (Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001).

- From a *psychological* perspective, it is theorized that individual personality, perceptions, and attitudes cause workers to leave. Thus, early studies focused on workers age, individual commitment, fear of physical harm, lack of personal challenge in the work, and race/ethnicity (Jayratne & Chess, 1984; Siefert, Jayratne, & Chess, 1991; Rycraft, 1994; Silver, Poulin & Manning, 1997; Freund, 2005).
- Using a *sociological* perspective workers are thought to leave due to employment-related factors. Some studies have therefore investigated the role of workload, social support, on the job stress, burnout, supervisor support, limited promotional opportunities, agency culture and climate (Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Koeske & Kirk, 1995; Jayratne, Himle, & Chess, 1991; Nissly, Barak, & Levin, 2005; Landsman, 2001; Silver, Poulin, & Manning, 1997, Smith, 2005; Glisson & James, 2002; Drake and Yadama, 1996).
- Finally, from an *economic* perspective, some studies have suggested that workers are expected to leave when pay is low and other employment alternatives are

available (Landsman, 2001; Sharma, McKelvey, et al, 1997; Siefert, Jayaratne, & Chess, 1991; Smith, 2005; Stremmel, 1991; Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1991).

More recent studies have looked at the way these various perspectives might interact to affect turnover, proposing a more complex model (Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Landsman, 2001, Glisson & James, 2002).

Barak and colleagues (Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001) conducted an important meta analysis[1] of 25 empirical studies that examined turnover or intention to quit (shown to be the single strongest predictor of turnover). Significant attention to this meta analysis is warranted as the criteria for inclusion of studies were (1) a specific examination of antecedents to turnover or intention to quit, (2) study populations consisting of child welfare workers, social workers or human workers and (3) reporting their results as correlations or multiple regressions. After categorizing the variables in these studies into Demographic Factors, Professional Perceptions, and Organizational Conditions, the effect size for each of these categories was calculated.

Demographic factors included in the meta-analysis were those that were significantly related to either intention to quit or actual turnover. Some studies have reported that demographic characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, job level, gender, having children at home, and length of tenure with an organization are predictors of turnover. In this meta-analysis, such demographic factors were grouped into personal and work-related factors. Results indicate that age, children, socioeconomic status, and locus of control were significant predictors of intention to quit, while only age was a significant predictor of actual turnover. In considering work-related demographic factors, only experience was a significant predictor of intention to quit, while competence, education, experience, and experiencing an internship were significant predictors of actual turnover. None of the personal demographic characteristics (age, ethnicity, gender, etc.) were related to either intention to quit or actually leaving employment.

Professional perceptions include burnout, professional commitment to the client group served, values consistent with the organization and job satisfaction. In the meta analysis these factors were grouped into the categories of burnout, value conflict, job satisfaction, organization commitment, and professional commitment. Of these categories, burnout, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were all strongly related to intent to quit and actual turnover, while value conflict and professional commitment did not evidence a strong influence.

Organizational conditions included factors specific to a work site. Such factors include support from co-workers, lack of clarity of job description, job stress, role overload, team support, and the perception that management "plays fair" in all aspects of policy and procedure, including compensation parity. In the meta analysis stress, social support fairness of management practices and physical comfort were all strongly

[1] A meta analysis is a method of synthesizing a number of different studies in order to develop a single summary of results. It uses "effect size" as a summary estimate of the significance of any of the variables.

associated with actual turnover with physical comfort an additional factor strongly associated with intention to quit. The following chart summarized those factors that were most significantly associated in this study.

Figure 1: Factors related to Intention to Quit and Actual Turnover

Factors that are a significant* predictor of Intention to Quit	**Factors that are a significant predictor of Actual Turnover**
Demographics Personal (Age) Work Related	Demographics Work Related
Professional Perceptions Burnout Job satisfaction Organizational Commitment Professional Commitment	Professional Perceptions Burnout Job satisfaction Organizational Commitment
Organizational Conditions Stress Social Support Fairness-management Practices Physical Comfort	Organizational Conditions Social Support Fairness-management Practices
Employment Alternative	
	Intention to Leave

* Significant at $p \leq .001$ Source: Barak et al., 2001

While Barak and colleagues reported that the best predictors of intention to quit are organizational commitment, professional commitment, burnout, and job satisfaction, the presence of alternative employment also played a part. So, those employees who have limited commitment both to the organization and to the profession, are dissatisfied with their jobs and see another alternative are most likely to consider leaving, which is the strongest indicator that they will indeed leave.

The issue of commitment to public child welfare was explored in depth among public child welfare employees by Landsman (2001). Using a mailed survey to 1,634 workers in a state-administered public child welfare agency in the Midwest, 77.2 percent responded. Landsman hypothesized that the structure of the work environment (autonomy, support, promotional opportunities and "distributive justice" in pay and other policies), job stressors, (role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload, job hazards, community stress) and professional identification (possession of a social work degree, a stated "service" orientation) would affect job satisfaction which would subsequently affect both organizational and occupational commitment, thereby impacting intent to stay. In this well crafted study, organizational commitment was defined as a more emotional commitment to a specific organization while occupational commitment was defined as an emotional commitment to and identification with child welfare as a field of practice.

Results of this study suggest that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of organizational commitment, which is the most significant factor influencing intent to stay.

More simply, if employees are satisfied with their jobs, they develop a commitment to the organization and thus intend to stay with that organization. Job satisfaction, however, has less impact on occupational commitment, whereas organizational commitment does significantly impact occupational commitment. That is to say, satisfaction with one's job does not necessarily translate into commitment to child welfare as a field of practice, but commitment to the organization does.

In considering the relative impact of specific variables on job satisfaction, Landsman reported that support from supervisors, the presence of promotional opportunities, role conflict, lack of work overload and a service orientation are all significantly related to job satisfaction. The finding that role conflict is positively related to job satisfaction is a curious finding of this study that would suggest some further inquiry.

Recent research has pointed more to workplace variables in job satisfaction and intention to quit, rather than personal factors. Glisson and James (2002) studied 283 case managers in child welfare and juvenile justice in 33 different agencies, examining the role of culture and climate on burnout and job satisfaction among other variables.

The authors defined organizational climate as a perception by the worker of the work environment and organizational culture as the actual ways of operating in an organization. Organizational climate was further defined as psychological (the worker's perception of the impact of the workplace on his or her own psychological well being) and organizational (shared perceptions with other workers).

Organizational culture was defined as the norms and behavioral expectations in a workplace that are based on shared values. These norms may or may not be consonant with the overt expectations of a workplace. New employees are socialized into an organizational culture through shared expectations and normative beliefs, but do not have to share in the values that underlie the culture. Glisson and James noted that an effective method of identifying organizational culture is by querying workers about what they believe the norms are for others, not for themselves (referent-shift consensus model), while climate is best identified by asking about their own experience (direct consensus model).

To measure the above constructs, Glisson and James modified the Organizational Culture Inventory (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988) to include the constructive organizational culture and passive-defensive organizational culture scales, and modified James and Sells (1981) Psychological Climate Questionnaire. They hypothesized that culture and climate varied by team and that team-level culture impacted workers' attitudes, service quality, and actual turnover. Results from their analyses identified five distinct concepts that affected job satisfaction: climate, constructive culture, passive-defensive culture, structure, and work attitudes. Further, team constructive culture was shown to be the most significant and in fact only predictor and of work attitudes, service quality, and actual turnover.

From this brief review of relevant literature, several key components of job satisfaction and intent to quit emerge. First, individual demographic characteristics are

less important than organizational characteristics in predicting turnover. Only demographic characteristics that relate specifically to the work place, such as level of experience, seem to influence turnover or intention to quit. Personal demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, do not seem to exert a significant influence in workers decisions to leave.

Second, organizational factors are a stronger predictor of turnover through their impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but their relationship is complex. Clearly the behavioral norms of a workplace and its structure impact job satisfaction. A work environment that is supportive, that is seen to treat all employees with a sense of fairness, that provides some opportunities for promotion and autonomy in decision-making contribute to job satisfaction. In addition, the workers own perception of the impact of the job on their psychological health influences intention to quit. When workers believe they are being negatively impacted by their jobs, or experience emotional exhaustion and burnout, their commitment and satisfaction suffer.

Finally, commitment to the field of child welfare as an area of practice has only limited influence on intention to quit, which may be further influenced by the availability of alternative employment. If job satisfaction and organizational commitment are not present, workers with strong occupational commitment may stay with an organization only if suitable alternative are not available.

Results of a Survey of Bureau Staff

METHOD

Sample

The sample included all supervisors and worker-level staff (across all job categories) at the Bureau and its vendor sites. The initial sample population included 520 employees, of whom 16 were employed in Phone Intake, 91 in Initial Assessment, 38 in Safety Services, 250 in Ongoing Services, 78 in Out-of-Home Care, and 47 in Adoption services. A total of 296 surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 56.9 percent.

Table 1. Service and Location of All Bureau and Partner Agency Staff versus Staff Responding to Survey

	Total Number Employed			Responses Received				
Service/Location	Super-visors	Direct Serv. Staff	Total	Super-visors	Direct Serv. Staff	Not Spec-ified	Total	Pct.
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS	3	13	16	3	9		12	75.0
Initial Assessment								
Site 1	2	16	19	1	13		14	73.7
Site 2	3	15	17	1	6		7	41.2
Site 3	3	16	19	3	9		12	63.2
Site 4	3	16	19	2	10		12	63.2
Site 5	2	15	17	1	8		9	52.9
Site not specified					2		2	
Safety Services*								
Site 1	1	8	9		3		3	33.3
Site 2	2	10	12	1	6		7	58.3
Site 3	2	8	10		2		2	20.0
Site 4	1	6	7		7		7	100.0
Site not specified				1	1		2	
Ongoing Services								
Site 1	8	50	58	5	13		18	22.4
Site 2	6	42	48	3	9		12	25.0
Site 3	8	46	54	4	35	1	40	74.1
Site 4	6	43	49	6	31		37	75.5
Site 5	7	34	41	5	22		27	65.8
Site not specified					2		2	
Out-of-Home Care	6	72	78	6	27		33	42.3
Adoptions	5	42	47	5	25	1	31	66.0
Not Specified				1		6	7	
Total	68	452	520	48	240	8	296	56.9

* Because this office was in the process of being closed and most staff were to be leaving, results from respondents at Site 5 in Safety Services are not reported.

Table 1 shows the distribution of Bureau and partner agency supervisors and workers as of the start date of the survey and provides information on the location and service areas of those who responded. As indicated in the footnote, four responses from staff at Safety Services Site 5 were excluded from the analyses due to the fact that the office was being closed and many staff members were leaving. Since responses from individuals in those circumstances might differ in fundamental ways from those of staff not experiencing an office closure, it was considered appropriate to remove the four cases.

Supervisors, with a response rate of 70.6 percent, were more likely to complete the survey than worker-level staff, who registered a 53.1 percent response rate. Completion rates were highest among Phone Intake, CRT, and FISS staff (75.0%), followed by Adoptions (66.0%), Initial Assessment staff (61.5%), Ongoing Services (54.4%), Safety Services (44.7%) and Out-of-Home Care (42.3%). Two Ongoing sites and one Safety Services site had response rates at or below 25 percent, which may limit inferences that can be drawn about those particular offices. Two respondents did not indicate whether they were supervisors or direct-service staff, and eight did not specify a site or service.

Employees were invited to participate in the survey through an initial email announcement sent out by the Administrator of the Division of Children and Family Services and the Bureau Director. Respondents were advised that the survey would take approximately 30–45 minutes and that they could respond to the survey during their regular work hours. They were instructed to log on to a secure website through the use a unique identification number issued to all staff (WiSACWIS ID number). Because workers could be called away from their desk at any time for a case emergency, respondents could complete a part of the survey and then return at a later time to finish their responses before submitting it electronically. The survey remained on the website for eight weeks, and reminders were sent electronically after two weeks.

Initial response rates were lower than expected, so several strategies were used to increase participation. The researchers visited all the sites and verbally explained the purposes and methods of the study. In these meetings, some employees expressed reluctance to participate in the survey because of perceptions that supervisors would have access to their responses through their WiSACWIS ID number. As a result, paper surveys were distributed to all sites which included a self-addressed stamped envelope and workers were invited to complete the survey at home and return the survey in the mail. In the end, about 40 percent of completed responses were received via the web-based version of the survey and about 60 percent via the paper copy. The survey was initially made available online on March 25, 2005, paper versions were distributed to the sites beginning the week of April 18th, and workers were asked to complete the paper or web-based version by no later than May 13th. The last copy of the survey was received by mail on May 24th.

Development of Questionnaire

The web-based survey (see Appendix A) was constructed by the research team in consultation with a project steering committee, groups of Bureau and/or partner agency employees, and Child Welfare Training Program students at UWM. These groups contributed their thinking about general and specific issues that may contribute to turnover

in their organizations. The survey was constructed from well-established scales used to measure a variety of areas related to turnover or intent to leave as developed in the relevant literature. Additional scales and items were added by the researchers to measure variables for which no established scales existed. Scales used in the survey are described below.

Working Scale (WES-10) - This scale was originally developed with mental health workers as a measure of the impact of the work environment on job satisfaction (Rossberg, Eiring, & Friss, 2004). The authors of this scale report that poor working environments are associated with lower job satisfaction, absenteeism, somatic complaints, burnout and depression, and may be one of the major reasons for high staff turnover. This scale contains subscales that measure:

- *Self-realization* - the extent to which workers feel supported in the work environment, have confidence, and can use their knowledge on the job;
- *Workload* - the number of tasks assigned to employees and the degree to which they believe they must be in "two places at once;"
- *Conflict* - the degree to which employees have interpersonal conflicts and loyalty problems on the job;
- *Nervousness* – the extent of worry, nervousness, and tension workers feel on the job.

Measure of Worker Skill and Confidence - This is a 4-item scale developed as part of a study exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and burnout (Jayaratner, Himle, & Chess, 1991). The items measure the worker's perceived skill level, personal value conflict with their job, and commitment to child welfare.

Intent to Quit Scale - The expressed intention to quit one's job is a potent indicator of turnover . and is measured by this 3-item scale, developed for use among mental health professionals (Jinnett & Alexander, 1999).

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) - This 15-item scale is the most widely used measure of an attitude of commitment to one's job, which is well correlated with job satisfaction and retention (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). It measures a worker's identification with the goals and values of an organization, the willingness to go "above and beyond" for the organization and a desire to continue affiliation with the organization.

Maslach Burnout Inventory - From the most widely recognized scale of employee burnout, eleven items comprising the Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion subscales from the Human Service version were included (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Organizational Climate Scale - This 16-item scale measuring additional items relating to burnout (Glisson & James, 2002) was also included to tap more unique, individual dimensions of burnout embedded in workers' perceptions of the work environment. In particular the subscales of Role Conflict and Role Overload were included.

Abridged Job Description Index (AJDI) - This is a shoreter version of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) originally developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). It examines several

aspects of workplace environments that contribute to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These include Nature of Work, Present Pay, Opportunities for Promotion, Supervision, and People at Work. A companion measure, the Job in General scale, addresses overall satisfaction with work.

Organizational Culture Scale - This 31-item scale is a companion to the OCS above, developed by Glisson and James (2002). This scale measure "shared behavioral expectations and norms" in the supervisory group or team, the strongest predictor of job satisfaction or turnover. The four subscales measure norms are

- Achievement/motivational – Are workers challenged to do their best?
- Self-actualizing/individualistic – Are they encouraged to develop to their full potential?
- Humanistic/supportive – Are employees supported by supervisors and encouraged to support other team members?
- Interpersonal – Are

Modified Work Locus of Control Scale - This 20-item scale measures the control or professional discretion workers believe they exercise in their job in relation to the amount of control they believe others have (Gupchup & Worfgang, 1997).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) - This widely used 5-item scale (Diener et al., 1985) measures workers' personal satisfaction with their life in general which some in the Steering Committee suggested was related to job satisfaction in particular.

Personal Need for Structure Scale (PNS) - Students in the CWTP suggested that workers' tolerance for continuing work with the chaotic situations their clients often experience may be a function of their own need for predictability and order and predict burnout. One 4-item subscale (Desire for Structure) was extracted from the PNS developed by Neuberg and Newsom (1993).

Personal View Survey (PVVS-III-R) - This 17-item scale measures workers' personal resilience in the face of multiple demands (Maddi, 1997). It suggests that particular personality traits contributing to "hardiness" may be predictive of job satisfaction in child welfare.

A number of additional items were suggested in conversations with the Steering Committee, current employees, and graduate students who were former child welfare workers. In addition to questions about demographic characteristics, work position and history in child welfare, and interest in UWM's Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program, 41 specific questions about respondents' work experiences were constructed. Many of these questions utilized a Likert-type scale as a response format, similar to the format of questions in the standardized scales described above. Questions constructed by the research team queried the respondents in the following areas: Directiveness, Training, Cultural Competence, Safety, Reward of Job, Team-Agency Commitment, Supervisor Relationship, Court Relations, Job Difficulty, Organizational Support, Commitment to

Child Welfare, Satisfaction with Pay and Benefits, Effects of Turnover, and the Desire for Alternatives in the Job.

Data Analysis

The web-based survey from was created in the Teleform software. The form was exported to a .pdf format and cached in a directory on UWM's web server. A password (the worker's WiSACWIS ID number) was required to be able to access and complete the form. Workers were provided the URL to the web page in the email from Bureau administrators. They directed their web browser to that page, clicked on a hyperlink and the .pdf form was sent to their computer. The survey was filled out in their own web browser on their computer with the aid of Acrobat Reader. If they did not have this software on their computer, they were given the URL to obtain this free program.

When the survey was submitted by clicking on a "Submit" button at the bottom of the form, it was then sent to the web server on which the form and project html pages were cached. A common gateway interface (CGI) program in Perl script extracted the data, evaluated the form for completion, and sent the data via email to a special email account set up for the project. If data were not complete an html message was returned to the sending instructing them to check the survey and fix the unfilled fields. If data were complete, the script issued a "thank you" message to the sender along with a confirmation that the data were successfully received. The data were then downloaded by the Teleform server, extracted and written out as a data set for analysis in SPSS format.

RESULTS

Personal and Family Characteristics of Staff

Tables 2 and 3 show results from items that addressed personal characteristics of each respondent. Table 2 provides information from workers, while Table 3 details supervisor characteristics. Both differentiate staff in Ongoing Services, where turnover problems have been most severe, from those in all other service areas.

Values for worker ages in Table 2 are organized into categories to help illustrate major groupings. The mean age of Ongoing services workers was 28.8, while that of workers in other areas was 33.0, or slightly more than four years older. This difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.20$, $df = 220$, $p = .002$). Among Ongoing service workers the median age was 26.0, meaning that 50 percent of worker-level staff were at or below that value, while among workers in other service areas the median age was 30.0.

More than 70 percent of direct-service staff in both Ongoing and other services identified their primary race/ethnicity as Caucasian. A larger percentage of Ongoing workers as compared to those in other services identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, while more of those in other services reported a primary race/ethnicity of African American. These differences were not statistically significant.

About 40 percent of staff in Ongoing and in other services areas held a masters degree in social work or some other field. Some differences can be seen between the two groups across various educational backgrounds, but, as with the race/ethnicity variable, these are not statistically significant.

Meaningful differences did arise with respect to gross annual income from the respondents' Bureau jobs. Those in Ongoing Services were significantly more likely to occupy low-salary categories than those in other service areas ($X^2 = 32.72$, $df = 5$, $p = .000$). One in three Ongoing services case managers reported earning less than $30,000 per year, whereas only about one in eight direct-service staff members in other service areas was in this range. Similarly, about one in six direct-service staff outside of Ongoing services earned $40,000 per year or more, while only about one in 17 Ongoing services workers had a gross annual salary of that amount or higher.

Results comparing personal characteristics of supervisors in Ongoing services with those in other services are shown in Table 3. A quick review of the variables displayed reveals some differences between the groups, such as the lower proportion of African American respondents in Ongoing services and the lower proportion of those with MSW degrees in the Other Services group. Most of these differences were not statistically significant and cannot be concluded to be evidence of effects other than random variation. The exception is in the variable of gross annual income from each respondent's job. As can be seen in the table, few respondents in Other services appear in the two lowest income categories while relatively larger percentages have income in the higher categories. To sharpen the contrast, this variable was reduced to two categories of incomes at or below

$39,999 per year and $40,000 or higher. Results revealed a statistically significant difference ($X^2 = 2.98$, df = 1, p = .084), with supervisors in the Ongoing services group being likely to have lower annual incomes from their employment.

Table 2. Personal Characteristics – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services* (n=132)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Age	102			117		
25 and under		38	37.3		15	12.8
26-29		35	34.3		36	30.8
30-39		18	17.6		43	36.7
40 and over		11	10.8		23	19.7
Gender	105			124		
Female		96	91.4		113	91.1
Male		9	8.6		11	8.9
Race/Ethnicity	106			119		
Caucasian		81	76.4		85	71.4
African-American		15	14.2		22	18.5
Hispanic/Latino		7	6.6		3	2.5
Asian-American		0	0		1	0.8
Native American		0	0		1	0.8
Other		3	2.8		7	5.9
Education	106			124		
Bachelors degree in social work		24	22.6		34	27.4
Bachelors degree in other field		32	30.2		22	17.7
Some graduate work		22	20.8		28	22.6
Masters degree in social work		15	14.2		24	19.4
Masters degree in other field		13	12.3		16	12.9
Gross annual income from Bureau job	106			122		
Less than $30,000 per year		35	33.0		16	13.1
$30,000 to $39,999 per year		65	61.3		86	70.5
$40,000 to $49,999 per year		5	4.7		19	15.5
$50,000 or more		1	0.9		1	0.8

***** Includes Phone Intake, CRT, FISS, Initial Assessment, Safety Services, Out-of-Home Care, and Adoptions.

Table 3. Personal Characteristics – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Age	22			19		
25 and under		2	9.1		3	15.8
26-29		7	31.8		4	21.1
30-39		10	45.5		9	47.4
40 and over		3	13.6		3	15.8
Gender	23			21		
Female		18	78.3		16	76.2
Male		5	21.7		5	23.8
Race/Ethnicity	23			20		
Caucasian		20	87.0		11	55.0
African-American		2	8.7		6	30.0
Hispanic/Latino		0	0.0		1	5.0
Asian-American		1	4.3		1	5.0
Native American		0	0.0		0	0.0
Other		0	0.0		1	5.0
Education	23			22		
Bachelors degree in social work		1	4.3		3	13.6
Bachelors degree in other field		1	4.3		1	4.5
Some graduate work		0	0.0		1	4.5
Masters degree in social work		16	69.6		11	50.0
Masters degree in other field		5	21.7		6	27.3
Gross annual income from Bureau job	22			21		
Less than $30,000 per year		1	4.3		0	0.0
$30,000 to $39,999 per year		11	50.0		6	28.6
$40,000 to $49,999 per year		9	40.1		14	66.7
$50,000 or more		1	4.3		1	4.8

Table 4 displays variables relating to the family characteristics of worker-level staff. Some differences between those in Ongoing and those in other services areas again appear. For example, 42.5% of Ongoing services case managers reported being married as compared to 56.7% of worker-level staff in other services. Using a criterion of $p \leq .10$ as a threshold, this is a statistically significantly difference ($X^2 = 6.46$, df = 3, p = .09). Also statistically significant ($X^2 = 25.57$, df = 5, p = .000) is the difference in gross annual household income between the two groups. Almost 20 percent of Ongoing services workers have annual household incomes below $30,000 compared to only 7.3 percent of workers in other services. Meanwhile, about 30 percent of those in the latter group have gross annual household incomes above $75,000, versus fewer than nine percent among workers in Ongoing services. The two groups did not differ significantly with respect to children in the household, with most reporting having no children.

Table 4. Family Characteristics – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Marital Status	106			122		
Married or living w/ long-term partner (LTP)		45	42.5		69	56.6
Never married or never lived with LTP		53	50.0		41	33.6
Divorced or permanently apart from LTP		6	5.7		9	7.4
Separated from spouse or LTP		2	1.9		3	2.5
Gross annual household income	106			124		
Less than $30,000 per year		20	18.9		9	7.3
$30,000 to $39,999 per year		41	38.7		39	31.5
$40,000 to $49,999 per year		13	12.3		8	6.5
$50,000 to $59,999 per year		11	10.4		7	5.6
$60,000 to $74,999 per year		12	11.3		24	19.4
$75,000 or more per year		9	8.5		37	29.8
Children in household	102			116		
None		76	74.5		80	69.0
One		16	15.7		22	19.0
Two		7	6.9		6	5.2
Three or more		2	2.0		4	3.4

Table 5. Family Characteristics – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Marital Status	23			21		
Married or living w/ long-term partner (LTP)		13	56.5		13	61.9
Never married or never lived with LTP		8	34.8		4	17.4
Divorced or permanently apart from LTP		2	8.7		4	17.4
Separated from spouse or LTP		0	0.0		0	0.0
Gross annual household income	22			20		
Less than $30,000 per year		1	4.5		0	0.0
$30,000 to $39,999 per year		1	4.5		2	10.0
$40,000 to $49,999 per year		6	27.3		6	40.0
$50,000 to $59,999 per year		2	9.1		2	10.0
$60,000 to $74,999 per year		5	22.7		3	15.0
$75,000 or more per year		7	31.8		7	35.0
Children in household	21			21		
None		16	76.2		13	61.9
One		4	19.0		5	21.7
Two		1	4.8		1	4.3
Three or more		0	0.0		2	9.5

Contrary to differences observed among workers, supervisors in Ongoing versus other services did not differ significantly on any variables relating to family characteristics (Table 5). In both groups, half or more of the respondents were married, had no children, and had gross annual household incomes of $60,000 or more.

Professional Characteristics and Work Experiences of Staff

Results relating to levels of professional experience for workers and supervisors are shown in Tables 6 and 7. For each measure addressed, workers in Ongoing services had statistically significantly fewer years of experience than those in other services. For example, workers in other services had a mean of 6.3 years experience in human services overall, 5.3 years experience in child welfare, and 4.6 years experience in the Bureau, as compared to 4.1, 2.9 and 2.9 years experience, respectively, for case managers in Ongoing services. Overall, 50 percent of workers in other services had 3.5 years in their current position, whereas the 50th percentile mark for workers in Ongoing services was 2.1 years in their current position. Among supervisors, however, no significant differences were observed in levels of experience for any of the measures addressed (Table 7).

Table 6. Professional Experience – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)		
Variable	n	#	%	n	#	%
Years in social work or human services	78			95		
Less than one		7	9.0		4	4.2
One to two years		11	14.1		6	6.3
Two to three years		17	21.8		7	7.4
Three to four years		11	14.1		13	13.7
Four to five years		10	12.8		6	6.3
Five or more years		22	28.2		59	62.1
Years in child welfare	75			96		
Less than one		9	12.0		5	5.2
One to two years		16	21.3		9	9.4
Two to three years		20	26.7		9	9.4
Three to four years		13	17.3		16	16.6
Four to five years		5	6.7		12	12.5
Five or more years		12	16.0		45	46.9
Years in Bureau or partner agencies	72			102		
Less than one		10	13.9		5	4.9
One to two years		18	25.0		9	8.8
Two to three years		17	23.6		14	13.8
Three to four years		12	16.7		19	18.6
Four to five years		2	2.8		11	10.8
Five or more years		13	18.1		44	43.1

Table 7. Professional Experience – Supervisors

Variable	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Years in social work or human services	16			12		
Less than one		0	0.0		0	0.0
One to two years		1	6.3		1	8.3
Two to three years		0	0.0		0	0.0
Three to four years		1	6.3		0	0.0
Four to five years		2	12.5		1	8.3
Five or more years		12	75.0		10	83.3
Years in child welfare	17			15		
Less than one		0	0.0		0	0.0
One to two years		1	5.9		2	13.3
Two to three years		1	5.9		1	6.7
Three to four years		3	17.6		0	0.0
Four to five years		2	11.8		0	0.0
Five or more years		10	58.8		12	80.0
Years in Bureau or partner agencies	19			15		
Less than one		0	0.0		0	0.0
One to two years		2	10.5		3	20.0
Two to three years		3	15.8		1	6.7
Three to four years		2	10.5		2	13.3
Four to five years		2	10.5		0	0.0
Five or more years		10	52.6		9	60.0

Tables 8 and 9 report results for both workers and supervisors on other aspects of Bureau or partner-agency employment (referred to simply as "Bureau"). Almost all respondents in both groups were full-time employees, with no supervisors and only three case managers in Ongoing services reporting part-time employment. Also, few workers or supervisors had histories of having left Bureau employment and then returning.

Table 8. Employment Status in Bureau or Partner Agency – Worker-Level Staff

Variable	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)		
	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Part-time employee?	112			131		
Yes		3	2.7		0	0.0
No		109	97.3		131	100.0
Number of positions held in Bureau	112			131		
One		94	83.9		76	58.0
Two		12	10.7		37	28.2
Three or more		6	5.4		18	13.7
Previously left then rejoined Bureau?	112			132		
Yes		10	8.9		22	16.7
No		102	91.1		110	83.3

Table 9. Employment Status in Bureau or Partner Agency– Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Part-time employee?	23			23		
Yes		0	0.0		0	0.0
No		23	100.0		23	100.0
Number of positions held in Bureau	23			23		
One		5	21.7		8	34.8
Two		7	30.4		6	26.1
Three or more		11	47.8		9	39.1
Previously left then rejoined Bureau?	23			23		
Yes		3	13.0		4	17.4
No		20	87.0		19	82.6

A concern often voiced by human services workers in a variety of fields is that the time needed to take care of other responsibilities in their jobs impinges on time they could spend working directly with members of the families they serve. Table 10 shows results from a set of questions designed to address workers' perceptions of the time needed to complete various work tasks. These were divided into four categories: time spent directly with clients, time spent on services to clients but not with the clients themselves, time spent completing paperwork and general case documentation (including court reports, etc.) and time spent on other tasks. Results show that case managers in Ongoing Services reported spending statistically significantly less time in direct contact with clients (X^2=17.6, df=3, p=.001), significantly more time on services not involving direct client contact (X^2=12.3, df=3, p=.007), and significantly more time on "other" services (X^2=27.4, df=3, p=.000) than workers in areas other than Ongoing.

By way of further illustration, about one-third of workers not in Ongoing Services reported spending more than half of their time in direct contact with clients, as compared to less than one in seven Ongoing Services workers. Meanwhile, more than 60 percent of case managers in Ongoing Services spent more than one-fourth of their time on "other" services, compared to about 30 percent of workers in non-Ongoing areas. Where the two groups did not differ significantly was in the area of paperwork and documentation, on which more than two-thirds of worker-level staff in both groups reported spending half or more of their time.

If the above values seem to suggest that workers somehow spend more than 100 percent of their time on various job tasks, responses to another question about time demands indicate that indeed they typically exceed a standard 40-hour work week in the time they devote to their jobs. As shown in Table 11, more than 70 percent of worker-level staff in both groups reported spending 40 to 50 hours per week completing job tasks. In addition, statistically significant differences were noted between the groups, with case

managers in Ongoing Services reporting spending more hours on the job than those in other services (X^2=11.1, df=2, p=.004). Overall, about one-third as many case managers in Ongoing Services reported needing 40 hours or less to complete their work than did staff in other service areas (4.8% versus 13.3%), while Ongoing workers were more than twice as likely to report spending more than 50 hours per week (23.8% versus 10.2%).

Table 10. Time Spent on Different Job Tasks – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Proportion of time spent directly with clients	106			129		
Less than one-fourth		38	35.8		23	17.8
One-fourth to one-half		54	50.9		64	49.6
One-half to three-fourths		14	13.2		36	27.9
More than three-fourths		0	0.0		6	4.7
Proportion of time spent on services not involving direct contact with clients	106			128		
Less than one-fourth		39	36.8		69	53.9
One-fourth to one-half		40	37.7		44	34.4
One-half to three-fourths		21	19.8		14	10.9
More than three-fourths		6	5.7		1	0.8
Proportion of time spent on paperwork and documentation	107			129		
Less than one-fourth		3	2.6		3	2.3
One-fourth to one-half		28	26.2		42	32.6
One-half to three-fourths		50	46.7		60	46.5
More than three-fourths		26	24.3		24	18.6
Proportion of time spent on other tasks	107			129		
Less than one-fourth		40	37.4		90	69.8
One-fourth to one-half		45	42.1		31	24.0
One-half to three-fourths		13	12.1		5	3.9
More than three-fourths		9	8.4		3	2.3

Table 11. Time Needed to Complete Assigned Tasks – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Amount of time needed	105			128		
No more than 40 hours per week		5	4.8		17	13.3
40-50 hours per week		75	71.4		98	76.6
More than 50 hours per week		25	23.8		13	10.2

Tables 12 and 13 report responses to the same set of questions as above from supervisors in Ongoing versus other services. As would be expected, supervisors in both areas reported spending much less time than worker-level staff in direct contact with

clients and more time in other tasks—roughly evenly divided across the last three categories. Also, though some variation did exist between the two groups, no statistically significant differences were found between supervisors in Ongoing Services and those in other areas in terms of the proportion of time spent on major job tasks or total hours per week devoted to their jobs.

Table 12. Time Spent on Different Job Tasks – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Proportion of time spent directly with clients	23			22		
Less than one-fourth		20	87.0		18	81.8
One-fourth to one-half		3	13.0		4	18.2
One-half to three-fourths		0	0.0		0	0.0
More than three-fourths		0	0.0		0	0.0
Proportion of time spent on services not involving direct contact with clients	23			22		
Less than one-fourth		0	0.0		1	4.5
One-fourth to one-half		9	39.1		5	22.7
One-half to three-fourths		11	47.8		11	50.0
More than three-fourths		3	13.0		5	22.7
Proportion of time spent on paperwork and documentation	23			21		
Less than one-fourth		1	4.3		5	23.8
One-fourth to one-half		11	47.8		8	38.1
One-half to three-fourths		8	34.8		6	28.6
More than three-fourths		3	13.0		2	9.5
Proportion of time spent on other tasks	23			22		
Less than one-fourth		9	39.1		6	27.3
One-fourth to one-half		9	39.1		10	45.5
One-half to three-fourths		4	17.4		4	18.2
More than three-fourths		1	4.3		2	9.1

Table 13. Time Needed to Complete Assigned Tasks – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)		
Variable	Valid n	#	%	Valid n	#	%
Amount of time needed	23			21		
No more than 40 hours per week		4	17.4		0	0.0
40-50 hours per week		18	78.3		18	85.7
More than 50 hours per week		1	4.3		3	14.3

Involvement with Educational Opportunities

Since its inception in 1998, the Bureau has had a partnership with UWM to provide an opportunity for staff to earn an MSW degree. Commonly referred to as the "IV-E Stipend Program," the project provides funds for up to 12 employees at a time to leave their duties at the Bureau or its partner agencies and enroll full-time in the MSW program at UWM. Participants are paid a stipend of $1,100 per month while in the program, plus their tuition and fees are paid and they are given an allowance for book costs. The program takes 15 months to complete for staff who already hold a BSW degree, and 24 months for those who do not. After completing the program, participants must return to their original employer and work there for the length of time they were in the program.

Table 14 displays responses from worker-level staff to a series of questions in the survey that asked about their involvement with the program. Almost all reported being aware of it, and about one in six respondents in both Ongoing and Other services was a graduate of the program, a current applicant, or someone who had applied in the past. Among those who had not participated or applied, the most common reasons for not doing so were reluctance to agree to the work commitment following graduation and concern that, even with the stipend, the drop in income while in the program would be unaffordable. Staff from Ongoing and Other Services did not differ significantly in their level of participation or reasons for not doing so. Note that the percentages shown may sum to more than 100 since respondents could select more than one reason for not participating.

Table 14. Participation in IV-E Stipend Program – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)		Other Services (n=132)	
Variable	#	%	#	%
Graduate or current applicant	14	12.6	15	11.7
If not in program, ever applied in past?	5	5.3	7	6.4
If never applied, reason for not doing so:				
Don't want post-graduation work commitment	39	34.8	25	18.9
Even with stipend, can't afford income drop	38	33.9	44	33.3
Not interested in MSW	19	17.0	19	14.4
Haven't worked long enough to be eligible	14	12.5	5	3.8
Can't face returning to school at this stage of life	12	10.7	15	11.4
Don't think application would be accepted	9	8.0	15	11.4
Already have MSW	8	7.1	19	14.4
Takes too long to complete program	6	5.4	15	11.4
Already have Masters in other field	4	3.6	5	3.8
Enrolled in other MSW or Masters program	4	3.6	5	3.8
Never heard of program	1	0.9	7	5.3

Table 15 summarizes responses regarding supervisors' participation in the IV-E Stipend Program. About on in five in Ongoing and one in eight in Other services were graduates or current applicants to the program. Of the remainder, most had not taken part

because they already held the MSW degree, or felt they couldn't afford the drop in income. No significant differences between the two groups in levels of participation or reasons for not participating were found.

Table 15. Participation in IV-E Stipend Program – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)		Other Services (n=23)	
Variable	#	%	#	%
Graduate or current applicant	5	21.7	3	13.0
If not in program, ever applied in past?	1	6.3	0	0.0
If never applied, reason for not doing so:				
Already have MSW	10	43.5	14	60.9
Even with stipend, can't afford income drop	3	13.0	5	21.7
Can't face returning to school at this stage of life	2	8.7	1	4.3
Not interested in MSW	2	8.7	0	0.0
Don't think application would be accepted	1	4.3	3	13.0
Don't want post-graduation work commitment	1	4.3	1	4.3
Haven't worked long enough to be eligible	0	0.0	0	0.0
Never heard of program	0	0.0	0	0.0
Takes too long to complete program	0	0.0	1	4.3
Other	1	4.3	1	4.3

Starting in January 2005, another partnership between the Bureau and UWM sought to provide opportunities for staff who do not hold the MSW degree to take foundation-level courses on a part-time basis. In the Spring 2005 semester, two sections of a class from the first-year MSW curriculum were offered in the evenings at two Bureau sites. Two more classes were subsequently offered at other Bureau sites in two summer 2005 semesters. The cost per class is $463 per credit hour, or about $1390 for a typical three-credit class. The Bureau agreed to pay all but $500 of this cost per class, and some partner agencies had policies that would cover some or all of the remaining cost.

Results regarding participation in this program by worker-level staff are shown in Table 16. About one in nine case managers in Ongoing and one in 16 direct-service staff in Other services reported being currently enrolled in one of the classes or planning to take one in the summer. For those not enrolled and not planning to do so in the summer, about one-third either already held the MSW degree or were not interested in earning it. The next most common reasons for non-participation were cost factors or the inability to manage both job and classes at the present time. Between 6 and 14 percent of respondents had not heard of the program.

Among supervisors, only one respondent reported taking one of the spring classes or planning to do so in the summer (Table 17). By far the most frequent reason for non-participation was because the respondent already held the MSW. No significant difference between personnel in Ongoing and Other services were noted among either worker-level or supervisory staff.

Table 16. Participation in Evening MSW Classes – Worker-Level Staff

Variable	Ongoing Services (n=112)		Other Services (n=132)	
	#	%	#	%
Taking class in spring or summer	12	10.7	8	6.1
If not taking, reason for not doing so:				
Cost is too high	35	31.3	33	25.0
Job and classes too much to undertake right now	27	24.1	29	22.0
Already have MSW	16	14.3	25	18.9
Never heard of program	16	14.3	8	6.1
Not interested in MSW	15	13.4	20	15.2
Can't face returning to school at this stage of life	10	8.9	17	12.9
Child care problems prevent participation	7	6.3	5	3.8
Classes not offered at convenient days or times	6	5.4	10	7.6
Location makes participation difficult	2	1.8	4	3.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 17. Participation in Evening MSW Classes – Supervisors

Variable	Ongoing Services (n=20)		Other Services (n=21)	
	#	%	#	%
Taking class in spring or summer	1	4.3	0	0.0
If not taking, reason for not doing so:				
Already have MSW	18	78.3	16	69.6
Never heard of program	1	4.3	1	4.3
Child care problems prevent participation	0	0.0	2	8.7
Cost is too high	0	0.0	2	8.7
Job and classes too much to undertake right now	0	0.0	2	8.7
Classes not offered at convenient days or times	0	0.0	1	4.3
Can't face returning to school at this stage of life	0	0.0	1	4.3
Location makes participation difficult	0	0.0	1	4.3
Not interested in MSW	0	0.0	0	0.0

A noteworthy aspect of the above results is the fact that few staff who do not already hold the MSW degree report having no interest in earning it. Some insight into this issue is offered by results of a single item in the survey that asked staff to respond to the statement "I can't advance much farther in this organization unless I earn a higher degree." Supervisors, many of whom already hold an MSW or other Master degree, tended to be neutral in their response or to disagree slightly. However, on a five-point scale where "1" equaled strongly disagree and "5" equaled strongly agree, worker-level staff in both Ongoing ($M = 4.26$) and other of services ($M = 3.74$) tended to agree with the statement. In addition, Ongoing case managers' level of agreement was statistically significantly higher than that of workers staff in other services ($t = -2.51$, $df = 239$, $p = .01$). Given the greater level of turnover among Ongoing workers, this suggests that providing educational assistance to staff may be especially important in this service area.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured by use of an abridged version of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), originally developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). It is a widely used and often-cited measure that examines several aspects of workplace environments that contribute to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The abridged version, developed by Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, Julian, Thoresen, Aziz, Fisher, and Smith (2001) is termed the AJDI. It addresses five aspects of employment that are labeled Nature of Work, Present Pay, Opportunities for Promotion, Supervision, and People at Work, plus a sixth overall aspect of work termed Job in General. A summary score is computed for each area. Scores for the first five scales range from 0 to 15, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with that particular aspect of the job. Scores on the Job in General scale, which has eight items rather than five, range from 0 to 24, and again higher scores indicate higher satisfaction.

Table 18 presents AJDI scores for direct-services staff from Ongoing and other services. Mean scores for both groups are high the Nature of Work scale, which addresses the extent to which the nature of the work is seen as challenging, interesting, and rewarding. The means for both groups are close to the norm for this scale (M=12.27) and suggest that workers across service areas are not dissatisfied with the nature of their work. Scores on this scale were slightly lower in Ongoing staff, and this difference was statistically significant, as indicated by the value for *t* in the rightmost column, but the probability level was close to the relaxed threshold of $p \leq .10$ and may thus be only an artifact.

Table 18. Job Satisfaction – Workers

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
AJDI Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Nature of Work (0-15)	108	12.02	3.39	120	12.79	3.31	1.74*
Present Pay (0-15)	106	2.89	3.14	117	4.54	4.07	3.37***
Promotion Opportunity (0-15)	107	4.73	4.39	120	3.70	3.92	-1.86*
Supervision (0-15)	109	12.84	3.80	120	9.75	5.23	-5.08***
People at Work (0-15)	110	13.29	3.10	121	13.27	2.97	-0.05
Job in General (0-24)	108	12.12	6.74	120	14.99	6.83	3.19**

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Scores from the Present Pay scale tell a very different story. Both groups of worker-level staff showed much lower satisfaction with pay than with the nature of their work, and the score for case managers in Ongoing Services is more than a full standard deviation below the mean of 7.71 in the original AJDI study sample. This indicates a very substantial level of dissatisfaction with pay. Case managers in Ongoing were also statistically significantly lower in satisfaction with pay than those in other services, and the difference is sufficiently great that it is unlikely to be merely a statistical artifact.

Both groups also had lower mean scores than respondents in the AJDI's original study sample with respect to their satisfaction with opportunities for promotion. This difference was not as pronounced as in the case of satisfaction with pay, and the means of both groups are within one standard deviation of the original sample mean of 6.02,. However, the scores imply that lack of promotion options is seen as a meaningful problem by most worker-level staff. Also, though the difference is near the relaxed threshold of $p \leq .10$, worker-level staff in areas other than Ongoing were significantly less satisfied with their perceived promotion opportunities than were case managers in Ongoing Services.

Satisfaction with supervision was an area where the two groups of worker-level staff clearly differed. Ongoing case managers' mean score of 12.84 is about half a standard deviation higher than the mean of 10.51 in the original AJDI study sample, whereas the mean score of 9.75 among direct-service staff in other areas is below the study sample mean. As shown in the column on the right of the table, the two groups of workers are statistically significantly different, and at a level that is not likely to be simply a statistical artifact.

The People at Work scale addressed respondents' satisfaction with other personnel in their workplace with whom they interact. Mean scores for both groups were slightly above the mean score from the original study, and staff in Ongoing and those in other service areas did not differ significantly in their scores. This indicates that dissatisfaction with coworkers is not an apparent area of concern.

With respect to the Abbreviated Job in General (AJIG) scale, means from three study samples are provided in a recent article by Russell, Spitzmüller, Lin, Stanton, Smith, and Ironson (2004), and for the largest and most diverse sample a mean of 16.71 was reported for the JIG. This compares to a mean AJIG score of 14.99 for non-Ongoing workers and a mean of 12.12 for case managers in Ongoing Services. The latter mean is statistically significantly lower than the value for worker-level staff in other services. No standard deviation value for the AJIG is available for the main sample in the Russell et al. study, but the fact that the mean for the AJIG among Ongoing case managers is almost five points below that of the study sample and well below that of other Bureau workers indicates that overall job satisfaction in this group is excessively low.

Results for the AJDI scales among supervisors in Ongoing and other services are shown in Table 19. Consistent with earlier result indicating that supervisors in Ongoing Services earn significantly lower salaries than those in other areas, the table shows that Ongoing supervisors are significantly less satisfied with pay than their counterparts. Also, while the mean for that scale among supervisors in other services is very close to the mean in the AJDI study sample, among Ongoing supervisors it is almost four points lower.

For the remaining scales, the two groups of supervisors' scores did not differ meaningfully from each other or from the means reported for the sample on which the AJDI was validated. In two cases, the Nature of Work and People at Work scales, mean scores among both groups were higher than average, though not to the point of reaching statistical significance.

Table 19. Job Satisfaction – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)			
AJDI Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Nature of Work (0-15)	22	14.18	1.82	20	12.90	3.34	-1.57
Present Pay (0-15)	21	4.05	3.83	19	7.58	3.83	2.91*
Promotion Opportunity (0-15)	21	6.43	4.82	19	6.63	4.78	0.13
Supervision (0-15)	23	10.74	4.59	21	11.10	4.87	0.25
People at Work (0-15)	23	13.87	2.14	21	13.48	2.96	-0.51
Job in General (0-24)	23	15.39	5.36	20	17.90	5.01	1.58

* $p \leq .10$

Because satisfaction with the job in general will be one of two key dependent variables examined in regression analyses later in the report, it is important to determine whether differences in this variable exist not just between Ongoing and other services but across particular services or sites. Table 20 provides scores on the Abbreviated Job in General Scale (AJIG) scale by service area. Higher scores indicate higher overall satisfaction with the job, and as noted above, results from prior research suggest that a typical scores for the AJIG as about 16.7. Values shown in Table indicate that staff in Adoption are above this value, while those in Safety Services are near it, while all other groups score somewhat to well below. Those with the lowest scores for general job satisfaction are staff in Intake and related areas, followed by those in Ongoing. Values for job satisfaction among staff in both Intake and Ongoing are more than a full standard deviation below those of staff in Adoption services, which is typically considered an indicator of meaningful differences variation between the groups. Results from a one-way analysis of variance testing whether these scores differ significantly across all groups are shown in the bottom row of the table. They indicate that the values shown in the table are indeed statistically significantly different, and service area accounts for little more than eight percent of variation in AJIG scores. About 20 respondents declined to indicate their site when answering the survey, so the results shown do not include those individuals.

Table 20. Satisfaction with Job in General by Service Area – All Staff (n=271)

	Score*		
Service Area	Valid n	M	SD
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS	11	12.55	5.84
Initial Assessment	50	14.04	7.11
Safety Services**	20	16.85	4.94
Ongoing Services	132	12.66	6.61
Out-of-Home Care	30	15.43	6.45
Adoptions	28	18.54	6.48
$F = 4.93$, $df = 5$, $p \leq .000$; $Eta^2 = .085$			

* Abbreviated Job in General Scale (AJIG). Scores range from 0 to 24. Higher scores indicate higher satisfaction.

** Because this office was in the process of being closed and most staff were to be leaving, results from respondents at Site 5 in Safety Services are not reported.

Table 21 reports results for AJIG scores in which respondents are grouped by site rather than by service. For services such as Intake, Adoptions, and Out-of-Home Care, this produces the same groupings as in Table 20, but in Table 21 staff in Initial Assessment, Ongoing, and Safety Services are grouped by location. As before, significant differences are noted across groups. However, contrasts computed among the categories indicate that where most differences lie is between staff at the five principal Bureau sites and those at the Intake, Out-of-Home Care, and Adoption service offices. Differences between staff at the five main sites are not statistically significant. The effect size in this relationship is modest, with the Site variable accounting for about eight percent of the variation in AJIG scores, as indicated by the value for Eta^2.

Table 21. Satisfaction with Job in General by Site – All Staff (n=267)

	Score*		
Service Area	Valid n	M	SD
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS	11	12.55	5.84
Site 1 – IA, Ongoing, and Safety	30	14.23	6.06
Site 2 – IA, Ongoing, and Safety	26	14.08	6.78
Site 3 – IA, Ongoing, and Safety	52	13.83	6.52
Site 4 – IA, Ongoing, and Safety	55	12.35	7.09
Site 5 – IA & Ongoing	35	13.11	6.99
Out-of-Home Care	30	15.43	6.45
Adoptions	28	18.54	6.48
$F = 2.71$, $df = 7$, $p \leq .01$; $Eta^2 = .079$			

A third set of analyses examined differences in job satisfaction across employing organizations, as shown in Table 22. Employees from Intake and Initial Assessment were combined into a single category representing all state employees. Ongoing staff from Sites 1, 2, 3, and 5 and Safety Services staff from Sites 1, 2, and 3 represent all CFCP employees, and Site 4 staff from Ongoing and Safety services form the group from La Causa. Groups representing Lutheran Social Services and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) are the same as shown in previous analyses for Out-of-Home Care and Adoptions, respectively. Results indicate that La Causa employees had the lowest overall job satisfaction scores while those at CSSW had the highest. As indicated by the value of Eta^2 shown at the bottom of the table, about six percent of the variation in general job satisfaction can be accounted for by employing organization.

It should be noted, however, that because variation across employers also encompasses variation across function (e.g., Ongoing/Safety Services versus Adoption) the significant differences shown in Table 22 may have more to do with the nature of the work than the nature of the employer. Results of contrasts completed among the groups support this interpretation. They indicate that, as with previous analyses, the major differences across organization are found in state, CFCP, and La Causa employees versus those in LSS and CSSW. Also, results of post hoc comparisons between the two organizations whose employees provide the same services--CFCP and La Causa--indicate that the differences in scores shown in the table are not statistically significant. This again suggests that the important differences in job satisfaction are between service areas rather than employers.

Table 22. Satisfaction with Job in General by Employer – All Staff (n=267)

Service Area	Score*		
	Valid n	M	SD
State	61	13.77	6.88
CFCP	106	13.61	6.37
La Causa	44	12.36	7.09
LSS	30	15.43	6.45
CSSW	28	18.54	6.48
$F = 4.36$, $df = 4$, $p \leq .002$; $Eta^2 = .062$			

Work Environment

The nature of the environment within which staff complete their work can play an important role in job satisfaction and performance. To assess this, the survey included items from the Working Environment Scale (WES-10; Røssberg, Eiring, & Friss, 2004). Though originally developed for use in inpatient mental health settings, the scale measures four dimensions of the working environment that are typical of most human service agencies. These include: Self-Realization (the extent to which staff members feel supported, confident in their work, and able to use their knowledge toward their jobs); Workload (the number of tasks imposed on them and their feeling that they must be several places at once), Conflict (loyalty problems and interpersonal friction among staff); and Nervousness (whether staff worry about going to work or feel nervous or tense on the job).

Table 23 shows WES-10 results for worker-level staff. Scores for each scale range from 0 to 5, with higher scores indicated a higher level of that aspect of work. The WES-10 was validated on staff in a public mental health facility, and means from that sample for the Self-Realization, Work, Conflict, and Nervousness scales were 3.73, 3.41, 2.06, 1.98, respectively. Standard deviations ranged from .21 to .36. As can be seen from the table, both Ongoing workers and those in other services were more than one standard deviation lower than the above mean for Self-Realization scale, meaning they were substantially less able to draw personal satisfaction from their work than members of the validation sample. For the remaining three scales, workers were more than one standard deviation higher than in the validation sample, meaning they perceived their workloads as more burdensome, the level of conflict in their workplace as more extensive, and their comfort with the working environment as lower. Mean scores on all four scales were also higher among respondents

Table 23. Work Environment Ratings – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
WES-10 Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Self-Realization (0-5)	110	3.43	0.69	126	3.38	0.73	0.55
Workload (0-5)	109	4.02	0.84	126	3.75	0.82	2.55*
Conflict (0-5)	108	2.85	0.86	126	2.92	0.95	-0.65
Nervousness (0-5)	111	2.67	0.90	126	2.48	0.92	1.61

* $p \leq .05$

in Ongoing services, but these differences were not statistically significant except in the area of workload problems, where scores from staff in Ongoing were more than a full deviation higher than score from staff in other areas.

WES-10 scores from supervisory-level staff are shown in Table 24. General patterns in the scores are similar to those found in worker-level staff, with both groups having lower score for Self-Realization and higher scores for Workload, Conflict, and Nervousness than in the validation sample. Supervisors in Ongoing also showed higher mean scores for the latter three scales than in worker-level staff, and their scores were also statistically significantly higher than those of supervisors in other services.

Table 24. Work Environment Ratings – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)			
WES-10 Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Self-Realization (0-5)	23	3.46	0.57	21	3.65	0.68	-1.05
Workload (0-5)	23	4.15	0.76	21	3.45	0.59	3.39**
Conflict (0-5)	23	3.30	0.75	21	2.95	0.80	1.50
Nervousness (0-5)	23	2.91	0.96	21	2.26	0.72	2.53*

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .005$

Role Conflict, Role Overload, and Work Locus of Control

An important source of workplace stress involves the roles employees must assume in carrying out their jobs. *Role conflict* occurs when staff must complete tasks that may seem opposed to each, such as working to protect vulnerable children from harm while at the same time trying to keep them in the care of parents who may have maltreated them. *Role overload* describes situations in which so much is expected of staff that they cannot complete all their duties satisfactorily. Two scales adapted by Glisson and James (2002) from versions originally developed by Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970) were included in the survey to measure role conflict and role overload. Scores range from 9 to 45 for role conflict and from 7 through 35 for role overload, with higher scores indicating higher levels of each. Norms for the Glisson and James version of each scale have not been published, though both were used in research with child welfare staff.

Table 25 summarizes responses to both measures by worker-level staff. Though the role overload measure has a range that is ten points lower than the role conflict scale, its mean is almost identical. This suggests that meeting demands for the quantity of work expected in their roles is more difficult for respondents than balancing the sometimes-conflicting requirements of those roles. No significant differences appear between workers in Ongoing and other services regarding the levels of role conflict and role overload they experience.

Table 25. Role Conflict and Role Overload Scores – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Role Conflict (9-45)	108	25.32	6.96	127	25.67	6.82	-0.38
Role Overload (7-35)	108	24.31	5.21	127	23.19	5.67	1.56

* $p \leq .05$

Results of supervisors' responses to the role conflict and role overload measures are shown in Table 26. Again, role overload scores tend to be higher than those for role conflict, but differences between the two groups also appear, with supervisors in Ongoing services reporting significantly higher levels of both role conflict and role overload than their counterparts in other services.

Table 26. Role Conflict and Role Overload Scores – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)			
Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Role Conflict (9-45)	22	28.27	5.72	21	22.14	7.32	3.07**
Role Overload (7-35)	22	25.50	4.80	21	22.29	6.82	1.79*

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .01$

Problems such as role conflict and role overload may be heightened or moderated by staff perceptions regarding the degree of control they exercise over their work. The Work Locus of Control Scale (WLOC; Spector, 1988) assesses the extent to which staff perceive themselves as having some control over tasks and the manner in which they carry them out. A modified, shortened version of the WLOC (Gupchup & Wolfgang, 1997) was included in the survey to measure this perception. Scores on this version range from 20 to 100, with higher values indicating higher perceived control over one's work.

Results from the modified scale are shown in Table 27. Though limited norms are available for the modified WLOC, findings from a validation sample comprised of professional pharmacists produced a mean score of 74.9 and a standard deviation of 9.3. The means for Bureau workers and supervisors shown in the table are about half a standard deviation below that mean, indicating lower perceived control over their work. No significant differences appear between groups of Bureau staff.

Table 27. Work Locus of Control – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
WLOC Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Workers (20-100)	105	71.36	10.23	123	69.78	9.31	1.22
Supervisors (20-100)	23	70.96	10.98	22	72.41	16.69	-0.35

Organizational Commitment and Culture

Identification with the organization and commitment to its goals can be important determinants of both the quality of work life for employees and of their productivity. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) is a well-established measure of this aspect of work. It has nine items and produces a single score ranging between 1 and 7, with higher values representing higher levels of personal commitment to one's organization. For public-agency employees the OCQ has a mean of 4.5 and a standard deviation of .9.

The OCQ was included in the survey, and results for both workers and supervisors are shown in Table 28. Among supervisors, scores are slightly higher than the mean for public employees, indicating at least typical levels of commitment to the organization. Scores for worker-level staff are much lower, however, especially in the case of Ongoing workers, whose scores are almost one standard deviation below the mean. They are also significantly lower than scores for workers in other service areas. This suggests that Ongoing workers see themselves as having little personal commitment to the Bureau or its partner agencies.

Table 28. Organizational Commitment – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
OCQ Scale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Workers (1-7)	108	3.83	1.35	126	4.16	1.37	-1.81*
Supervisors (1-7)	23	4.61	1.13	22	4.75	1.50	-0.35

* $p \leq .10$

Commitment to one's organization may be affected by the workplace culture it promotes. Two contrasting types of organizational culture that have been frequently studied are *constructive* versus *defensive* cultures. In broad terms, organizations with defensive cultures seek to maximize performance by heightening competition between employees and rewarding those who succeed while punishing those who do not. Organizations with constructive cultures try to build environments that allow employees to work together to meet both personal and organizational goals. Research suggests that elements of constructive organizational cultures are associated higher levels of job satisfaction and lower turnover.

For this study, a version of the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI; Cooke & Rousseau, 1988), as adapted by Glisson and James (2002), was used to measure four elements of constructive organizational culture. These are *motivation* elements (e.g., the willingness to take on challenging tasks), *supportive* elements (encouraging others), *individualistic* elements (allowing achievement of personal potential), and *interpersonal* elements (promoting positive social relationships). Scores for these four subscales of the measure range from 7 to 35 for the first three elements and from 10 to 50 for the last. Higher scores indicate greater perceived efforts on the part of the organization to promote that aspect of a constructive organizational culture.

Results from worker-level staff are shown in are Table 29, and they are somewhat surprising. Despite being significantly lower than their counterparts on variables such as organizational commitment, satisfaction with pay, and equity of workload, workers in Ongoing services gave their organizations significantly higher ratings for promoting a constructive organizational culture than those in other services. For each element the mean rating by workers in Ongoing was about half of one standard deviation higher than the mean among workers in other services, and in each case this difference was significant. This view was specific to workers. As shown in Table 30, no differences appeared between Ongoing and non-Ongoing supervisors regarding their organizations' efforts to build constructive organizational cultures.

Table 29. Organizational Culture Scores – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
OCI subscale (score range)	Valid N	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Motivation (7-35)	109	24.82	6.14	127	21.47	6.04	4.21**
Interpersonal (7-35)	109	24.85	6.53	127	21.39	6.74	3.99**
Supportive (7-35)	108	24.80	6.41	127	20.95	6.49	4.55**
Individualistic (10-50)	108	34.25	9.24	127	29.17	8.82	4.30**

* $p \leq .000$

Table 30. Organizational Culture Scores – Supervisors

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
OCI subscale (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Motivation (7-35)	23	26.13	6.09	21	26.67	6.20	-0.29
Interpersonal (7-35)	23	27.04	6.20	22	26.63	6.97	0.21
Supportive (7-35)	23	27.13	6.00	22	26.63	6.99	0.26
Individualistic (range = 10-50)	23	35.65	9.32	22	35.86	9.98	-0.07

Burnout, Absenteeism, and Intent to Quit

A factor that plays a role in job satisfaction and that of itself can also serve as an indicator of the quality of employee functioning is the level of burnout among staff. Early work that addressed this problem in child welfare services defined it as "wearing out, exhaustion, or failure resulting from excessive demands made on energy, strength, or resources" (Daley, 1979). More recent work has refined the concept by focusing on how it can be measured, and the authors of the most widely used measurement tool define it as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity" (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996).

One version of their measure, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, was developed for and tested on professionals in human services, including education, medicine, and social

services. Two of three scales from this version, which is termed the MBI-HSS, were included in the survey. These were the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalization (DP) scales, which measure, respectively, the extent to which workers feel depleted in their emotional resources and unable to give of themselves to clients, and the degree to which they have developed calloused, unsympathetic, or dehumanizing attitudes toward clients.

Consistent with work by Glisson and James (2002), we used shortened versions of the EE and DP scales in order to make the survey as brief as possible. Published norms for the EE and DP scales are based on the full versions, so a mean-substitution procedure was used to compute estimated scores for each scale. Those for worker-level staff are shown in Table 31. Scores on the EE scale range from 8 to 36, with higher values indicating greater emotional exhaustion. Among professionals in social services the mean score in the national norm sample (n=1,538) was 21.35, and a score of 27 is considered the threshold for unacceptably high levels of emotional exhaustion. As the table indicates, the mean level of emotional exhaustion in the Ongoing services sample was within two points of this threshold and was statistically significantly higher than the mean for direct-service staff in other areas. Forty percent of Ongoing case managers had scores at or above 27, compared to 24 percent in Other services.

Scores on the Depersonalization scale range from 5 to 20, with higher values indicating higher tendencies toward depersonalization of clients. The national average among social service professionals is 7.46 and excessively high scores are considered to be those of 11 or more. The mean of 10.62 for Ongoing case managers is within a half point of this value and is again statistically significantly higher than the mean score in the Other services sample. As with the EE scale, 40 percent of Ongoing services workers had scores at or above this level, versus 18 percent of workers in other services.

Table 31. Burnout – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=108)		Other Services (n=126)		
Scale (score range)	M	SD	M	SD	t
Emotional Exhaustion (8-36)	24.99	6.71	22.77	6.50	-2.58*
Depersonalization (5-20)	10.62	3.43	9.47	3.48	-2.53*

* $p \leq .05$

Table 32 shows MBI-HHS results for supervisors. Scores for those in both Ongoing and others services are slightly lower than among worker-level staff, though by small margins in Ongoing and slightly high margins in other services. On the EE scale, the mean score for Ongoing supervisors is above the national mean, while for supervisors in other services it is below. The Ongoing supervisors' score is significantly higher that that of other supervisors. Only 10 percent of those in the latter group had score higher than the threshold value of 27, or about half as many as in Ongoing. For the DP scale, supervisors in Ongoing again had higher means scores the both the national average and their counterparts in other services, though the latter difference was not statistically significant.

Still, almost 30 percent of respondents in Ongoing had DP scores of 11 or higher, versus less than 10 percent of those in other services.

Table 32. Burnout – Supervisors

Scale (score range)	Ongoing Services (n=21) M	Ongoing Services (n=21) SD	Other Services (n=22) M	Other Services (n=22) SD	t
Emotional Exhaustion (8-36)	24.10	6.71	20.18	5.79	-2.40*
Depersonalization (5-20)	10.22	3.10	8.81	2.60	-1.66

* $p \leq .05$

Given the greater occurrence of turnover in Ongoing Services, it was anticipated that staff in this area would also show greater levels of absenteeism. To measure this, respondents were asked to report the number of days in the past six months when they had missed work for reasons other than scheduled time off. As shown in Table 33, results for worker-level staff indicate that, contrary to expectations, Ongoing Services case managers reported substantially fewer unscheduled days absent than those in Other services, and this difference was statistically significant (X^2=32.5, df=5, p=.000). More than half of Ongoing Services workers reported taking no unscheduled days off in the six months, as compared to less than one-fourth of workers in other service areas. Table 34 shows that supervisors in Ongoing services reported fewer unscheduled absences than those in other services. These differences were not statistically significant, however.

Table 33. Unscheduled Days Absent in Past Six Months – Worker-Level Staff

Days	Ongoing Services (n=112) #	Ongoing Services (n=112) %	Other Services (n=132) #	Other Services (n=132) %
None	59	52.7	31	23.8
1 day	20	17.9	26	20.0
2-3 days	25	22.3	36	27.7
4-5 days	7	6.3	17	13.1
6-9 days	1	0.9	12	9.2
10 or more	0	0.0	8	6.2

Table 34. Unscheduled Days Absent in Past Six Months – Supervisors

Days	Ongoing Services (n=23) #	Ongoing Services (n=23) %	Other Services (n=23) #	Other Services (n=23) %
None	11	47.8	8	34.8
1 day	7	30.4	3	13.0
2-3 days	4	17.4	7	30.4
4-5 days	1	4.3	2	8.7
6-9 days	0	0.0	1	4.3
10 or more	0	0.0	2	8.7

Staff members' intention to remain in or resign their positions is commonly used in organizational research as an indicator of potential future problems. This survey used a three-item set of questions of intention to quit that was developed by Jinnett and Alexander (1999). Responses from worker-level staff members to each of the three items are shown in Table 35. On a seven-point scale in which higher values indicated higher levels of agreement with the statements shown, the mean response for both groups was slightly above the middle value of 4.0. Scores among Ongoing Services case managers tended to be higher for each item and for the overall scale average, but the differences were not statistically significant.

Table 35. Intent to Quit – Worker-Levels Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)			Other Services (n=132)			
Item*	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
I frequently think of quitting this job.	110	4.38	2.12	126	4.36	2.10	-0.09
I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	109	4.68	2.17	126	4.40	2.29	-0.96
There is a good chance that I will leave this job in the next year or so.	109	4.73	2.18	126	4.32	2.33	-1.41
Composite ITQ score (range = 1-7)	109	4.61	2.00	126	4.36	2.07	-0.95

* Response options were 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree

The three-item composite measure was validated on a large sample (n=1,670) staff in VA mental health facilities nationally. Results from that sample showed a mean score of 3.05, with a standard deviation of 1.58. For Ongoing case managers in this study the mean composite score was 4.61, or about one standard deviation above that in the validation sample, and this indicates a very high level of intention to quit. Though lower than in Ongoing, the mean composite score of 4.36 among workers in other areas was also quite elevated in comparison to the validation sample.

As shown in Table 36, the same general patterns appear in results from supervisors, with scores moderately to substantially above the middle range of responses and a composite score well above the mean of the validation sample members. Also, though mean scores for respondents in Ongoing are consistently higher than those in other services, the two groups do not differ significantly.

Because turnover intention, together with general job satisfaction, will be used as a dependent variable in multivariate analyses later in the report, analyses were also completed on variation in intent to quit across service, site, and employing organization. Table 37 reports results from those analyzing service area. As will be discussed, analyses

Table 36. Intent to Quit – Supervisors

Item*	Ongoing Services (n=112) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=132) Valid n	M	SD	t
I frequently think of quitting this job.	23	4.26	1.94	20	3.75	2.34	-0.78
I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	23	4.17	2.17	20	3.80	2.55	-0.52
There is a good chance that I will leave this job in the next year or so.	23	4.26	2.20	20	4.10	2.43	-0.23
Composite ITQ score (range = 1-7)	23	4.23	2.00	20	3.88	2.31	-0.53

* Response options were 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree

Table 37. Intent to Quit (Single Item) by Service Area – All Staff (n=271)

Service Area	Valid n	M	SD
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS	11	5.27	2.15
Initial Assessment	52	4.37	2.15
Safety Services*	21	4.14	1.90
Ongoing Services	134	4.37	2.08
Out-of-Home Care	31	4.26	2.11
Adoptions	30	3.67	2.26
$F = 1.08$, $df = 5$, $p \leq .37$; $Eta^2 = .019$			

* Because this office was in the process of being closed and most staff were to be leaving, results from respondents at Site 5 in Safety Services are not reported.

revealed that the first item of the ITQ scale, "I frequently think of quitting this job," was found to be a more informative indicator of turnover intention than the full ITQ score, so results shown in the table are from responses to that particular item. Scores range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher levels of agreement with the statement.

Results in Table 37 show that, though small differences exist in frequency of thoughts of quitting, with Phone Intake staff having the highest such mean, these difference are not statistically significant. Overall, as shown by the value for Eta^2 at the bottom of the table, differences across service areas account for less than two percent of variation in intent to quit. Tests were also conducted to determine whether staff differed on intent to quit based on site and employing organization. Results again showed no significant differences and minimal effect sizes for those variables, so the findings are not reported in tabular form.

A set of follow-up questions developed by Jinnett and Alexander (1999) asked respondents for reasons why they might quit their jobs. As shown in Table 38, the top reason for worker-level staff in both Ongoing and other services was low salary. This was cited by four of five case managers in Ongoing Services and more than three of five

workers in other areas. The next three most commonly cited factors, overload of amount of work, demands of job, and caseload level, were all related to the issue of job pressures.

Some differences between groups can be seen, such as a greater tendency for non-Ongoing workers to cite internal organizational issues as potential reasons for leaving. For example, these staff were more than twice as likely to cite problems with supervision, scheduling of work hours, and working conditions as reasons they might quit than staff in Ongoing. In contrast, staff in Ongoing were more likely to call attention to problems with pay or job demands, including relations with the court.

Table 38. Reasons Why Might Leave Job – Worker-Level Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=112)		Other Services (n=132)	
Reason	#	%	#	%
Low salary	90	80.4	82	62.1
Overload of amount of work	67	59.8	68	51.5
Demands of this particular job	59	52.7	48	36.4
Caseload level	36	32.1	42	31.8
Policies and procedures	26	23.2	51	38.6
Need for other benefits	20	17.9	26	19.7
Inability to have a family life	19	17.0	32	24.2
Lack of support and feedback from supervisor	16	14.3	43	32.6
Scheduling of work hours	15	13.4	35	26.5
Lack of job security	14	12.5	18	13.6
Time spent in court-related activities	14	12.5	7	5.3
Poor reputation of this occupation	14	12.5	13	9.8
Working conditions	9	8.0	26	19.7
Children/parents this program serves	2	1.8	3	2.3
Poor relations with coworkers	1	0.9	2	1.5

Among supervisors, only five potential reasons for quitting were reported, and again low salary was the most frequently cited by respondents from both Ongoing and other service areas (Table 39). Next most common among supervisors in Ongoing were lack of support from supervisor, job demands, need for other benefits, and lack of job security, whereas a need for other benefits was second after salary concerns among supervisors in areas other than Ongoing Services. In both groups, pay concerns (Ongoing) or a combination of pay and benefit concerns (other services) were cited more than twice as often as any other potential reason for quitting.

An additional factor in decisions to continue or quit is the perceived availability of acceptable alternatives. A single-item indicator included in the survey was the statement "I feel confident that I could find a job as good as this elsewhere if I chose to quit," to which respondent indicted agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale. All staff indicated moderate levels of agreement wit the statement, but the level of agreement was about a half-point higher among both workers (M = 3.65) and supervisors (M = 3.87) in Ongoing

Table 39. Reasons Why Might Leave Job – Supervisors

Reason	Ongoing Services (n=23)		Other Services (n=23)	
	#	%	#	%
Low salary	17	73.9	10	43.5
Lack of support and feedback from supervisor	8	34.8	3	13.0
Working conditions	6	26.1	3	13.0
Need for other benefits	5	21.7	9	39.1
Lack of job security	4	17.4	2	8.7
Policies and procedures	0	0.0	0	0.0
Caseload level	0	0.0	0	0.0
Scheduling of work hours	0	0.0	0	0.0
Overload of amount of work	0	0.0	0	0.0
Demands of this particular job	0	0.0	0	0.0
Inability to have a family life	0	0.0	0	0.0
Poor reputation of this occupation	0	0.0	0	0.0
Poor relations with coworkers	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children/parents this program serves	0	0.0	0	0.0
Time spent in court-related activities	0	0.0	0	0.0

services than in their counterparts in other services (M = 3.33 and 3.40, respectively). Among workers, this difference was statistically significant (t = -1.88, df = 232, p = .06). This finding may mean that case managers in Ongoing are exceptionally confident of their attractiveness to prospective employers, but it might also indicate that they attach a sufficient low value to the job that many alternatives would be considered acceptable.

Perceptions of Professional Self

The survey included a series of questions about staff members' views of themselves as professionals. Because the questions apply to both worker-level and supervisory staff without regard to those differing roles, results are presented for both groups in combination, though distinctions will continue to be shown between staff in Ongoing and Other services.

Table 40 shows results for four such items drawn from previous research that included social workers in child welfare and other areas of specialization (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Jayaratne, Himle, & Chess, 1991; Siefert, Jayaratne, & Chess, 1991). Results indicate, first, that staff members in both service areas rate their knowledge and mastery of skills relevant to their jobs relatively highly, with both groups showing mean scores in excess of 5.0 on a 7-point scale. However, staff in areas other than Ongoing services rate their job-relevant knowledge and skills significantly higher than those in Ongoing. Despite assigning relatively high ratings to their knowledge and skills, however, staff in both areas gave only modest ratings to their success in their professional work with clients served in the past year, and those in Ongoing rated their work as significantly less successful than those in other services. Ratings of the frequency with which respondents encounter value conflicts in their work did not differ significantly between the two groups, and the means

for both are close to those reported in earlier studies of child welfare workers (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). However, as in the earlier study, the mean level for frequency of values conflicts reported by Bureau staff are higher than those found among social workers in specializations such as family counseling or community mental health.

Table 40. Perceptions about Knowledge, Success, and Value Conflicts

		Ongoing Services (n=133)		Other Services (n=152)		
	Coding	M	SD	M	SD	t
Knowledge of subject matter in your area of practice.	1 = Poor, 7 = Excellent	5.56	0.93	5.77	0.84	1.96*
Mastery of practice methods relevant to your job.	1 = Poor, 7 = Excellent	5.35	1.05	5.67	0.89	2.80**
Success in professional work with clients served in past year.	1 = Not at all successful, 7 = Very successful	3.11	0.56	3.32	0.58	3.00**
Frequency with which professional values conflict with your work.	1 = Never, 7 = Always	2.49	0.82	2.36	0.97	-1.19

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

Results from three questions concerning staff perceptions of their skills in working with diverse client populations are shown in Table 41. These questions were created specifically for the survey, thus the results cannot be compared to broader norms. The results nonetheless suggest that most line- and supervisor-level staff from Ongoing as well as other services consider themselves competent to work cross-culturally. For example, respondents from both services gave themselves mean ratings of 4.3 or higher on a 5-point scale in their level of agreement with the statement that they felt comfortable working with clients of different racial/ethnic backgrounds than their own.

Table 41. Perceptions about Personal Cultural Competence

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
I am often painfully aware of the differences between me and the clients I serve.	129	3.22	1.02	145	3.11	1.21	0.78
I feel comfortable working with clients of different racial/ethnic backgrounds than mine.	133	4.29	0.79	152	4.36	0.93	-0.67
I often feel self-conscious about being a different race or ethnicity than my clients.	133	1.96	0.97	150	1.76	0.92	-1.80*

* $p \leq .10$

Though confident, staff members were not blind to differences between themselves and their clients. Respondents in both groups reported moderate agreement that they were sometimes painfully aware of these differences, though they tended to disagree that they often felt self-conscious about racial/ethnic differences. This last area was the only one of the three in which statistically significant differences between groups were noted, with Ongoing staff being more likely to report such self-consciousness than those in other services. This finding may relate to the fact that staff members in Ongoing were, on average, less experienced than those in other services. Holding constant the effect of age, staff members' level of experience with the Bureau was found to be significantly predictive of their response to this question, with those who had shorter employment histories likely to indicate greater agreement with the statement.

Table 42 reports results from two questions created for the survey that asked about respondents' commitment to the field of child welfare. Those in both Ongoing and other services agreed at a mean level of 3.8 or higher on a 5-point scale that they were interested in child welfare and would stay in it given good advancement opportunities. However, staff in Ongoing had a significantly lower level of agreement than those in other services. Perhaps more striking, respondents in Ongoing tended to agree that they would like to stay in human services but not child welfare, while those in other services were significantly more likely to be willing to remain in child welfare.

Table 42. Commitment to Child Welfare

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Child welfare interests me, and if advancement opportunities are good I'd like to have a career in it.	135	3.78	1.06	153	4.06	1.03	-2.29*
I'd like to stay in the field of human services, but not in child welfare.	130	3.03	1.17	152	2.69	1.22	-2.37*

** $p \leq .10$

Work-Related Personal Characteristics of Staff

In addition to staff members' perceptions of themselves, aspects of who they are as individuals may also affect how they carry out their work and respond to their work environment. For example, child welfare work is well-known to be an emotionally demanding, thus it seems reasonable to ask whether some individuals have personal characteristics that enable them to meet these demands more effectively or for a longer time than others. Four such characteristics—psychological resilience, general psychological well-being, need for order and structure, and orientation toward directive versus non-directive approaches in working with clients.

Psychological resilience, also referred to as hardiness, is often defined as the ability to withstand stresses that might otherwise begin to erode personal coping or job performance (Kobasa, 1979). The most well-used instrument for assessing it is the Personal Views Survey (PVS-III), which is an 18-item scale that measures four dimensions of hardiness (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2001). The first, *commitment*, involves the ability to continuing pursuit of a goal in the face of diversity. The second, control, refers to the belief that difficulties can be understood and mastered. A third component, *challenge*, addresses the ability to become energized rather than deflated when faced with difficulties. The final component, *overall hardiness*, combines aspects of the first components with elements of general resilience. Means from large-scale studies for each of the four scales are 12, 10, 10, and 32, respectively.

The first rows in Table 43 show mean values for all staff on each of the PVS-III subscales. Results indicate that, as a group, Bureau workers and supervisors are roughly on par with population norms for the Control and Challenge aspects of psychological resilience, somewhat higher than the norm for Overall Hardiness, and almost a full standard deviation above the norm for Commitment. No significant differences appear between Ongoing and non-Ongoing staff, and in separate analyses no differences were found between worker- and supervisor-level staff.

Also shown in Table 43 are scores for all staff on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), which is among the most well-used measures of general psychological well-being. As with hardiness, psychological well-being may be a determinant of staff members' ability to derive rewards from their work and deal with its challenges. The five-item SWLS produces a single, overall well-being score. Because a narrower range of response options was used in the survey than is customary for the SWLS, comparisons with populations averages are only approximate. On the scale used in the survey, the population average would be expected to be 14.3. The average of about 17 for Bureau staff suggests that, as a group, their level of psychological well-being is somewhat above average. No differences were found between staff in Ongoing services and those in other areas, and no differences were found between workers and supervisors.

The lives of families served by the Bureau are often chaotic and unpredictable, and the ability to adapt and cope with this may affect staff members' employment satisfaction and longevity. The Personal Need for Structure (PNS; Thompson, Naccarato, Parker, & Moskowitz, 1993) measures individual's ability to manage ambiguity, lack of structure, and phenomena that present themselves in shades of gray rather than in black and white. The four-item Need for Structure (NS) subscale from the PNS was included in the survey to determine the extent to which Bureau staff vary on this dimension. Scores on the PNS range from 1 (low need for structure) to 5 (high need for structure). Studies on samples of college students produced a mean score of 3.4 for the NS subscale.

Table 43. Work-Related Personal Characteristics – All Staff

		Ongoing Services (n=23)			Other Services (n=23)			
Characteristic	Measure (score range)	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Psychological resilience	Personal Views Survey-III							
	Commitment (3-18)	121	14.86	2.65	146	14.88	2.81	-0.07
	Control (3-18)	121	10.15	1.57	146	10.36	2.14	-0.91
	Challenge (3-18)	121	11.17	1.82	146	11.20	1.90	-0.11
	Overall Hardiness (18-48)	121	36.23	4.51	146	36.43	5.60	-0.32
Psychological well-being	Satisfaction with Life Scale (5-25)	128	17.04	3.51	154	17.14	4.03	-0.21
Desire for order, structure	Personal Need for Structure Scale (1-5)	128	3.45	0.70	154	3.51	0.70	-0.73
Directiveness	Scale developed for survey (1-5)	132	3.01	0.67	144	2.73	0.66	3.47*

* $p \leq .01$

Results for Bureau staff in Table 43 indicate that their scores on the NS subscale fall near the mean reported above, which suggests that staff have no lower or higher psychological need for structure than others. Also, no differences between groups (Ongoing versus other staff; workers versus supervisors) were found.

"Directiveness" has been defined as the degree of control a counselor, therapist, or other change agent exercises over clients in the course of the helping process (Karno, Beutler, & Harwood, 2002). Some professionals prefer highly directive approaches whereas others are nondirective, and this is a job-related personal characteristic on which Bureau staff may also differ. The final row in Table 43 reports results from four items specifically developed to measure directiveness in this study. Examples of these include "I sometimes have to be pretty bossy with my clients in order to help them make progress," and "It frustrates me when my clients won't listen to reason."

The four items used in the results reported in Table 43 were selected from an initial set of nine questions on the basis of item-total correlations. The scale has an internal consistency of .62 as measured by coefficient alpha. Its scores vary between 1 and 5, with higher values indicating more directive attitudes. Results show that, with a mean of 3.01 on a 5-point scale, staff in Ongoing services were near the exact middle in the range of possible scores. Those in other services areas had somewhat less directive attitudes (M = 2.73), and this difference was statistically significant.

Issues Specific to Working for the Bureau and its Partner Agencies

The following tables present means and standard deviations from items on the survey that asked specifically about working for the Bureau and its partner agencies. Items are grouped by the general topic they address, with each table presenting a different topic. For all items shown in this section, respondents indicated their agreement with each item on a five-point scale ranging where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher values for the mean thus indicate greater general agreement with each statement. Values are shown for personnel in Ongoing Services versus all other service areas and are based on responses from both supervisors and worker-level staff.

Across all service areas, respondents tended to disagree that the pre-service training they received gave them the information needed to get started with their work, though staff in services other than Ongoing disagreed significantly more strongly (Table 44). Compared to those in Ongoing, respondents in other services were also significantly more likely to view their training for work with culturally or racially diverse clients as inadequate, and they were significantly more likely to believe they needed better training than they had actually received. Staff in Ongoing were more likely to believe that the job could be learned only by doing rather than being trained for it, though members of both groups disagreed with the statement that they didn't know as much as they should in order to do their jobs well.

Table 44. Opinions about Training – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
The pre-service training I received gave me the information necessary to get started with my cases.	133	2.52	1.05	145	2.17	0.95	2.90**
I feel the Bureau has given me adequate training for work with culturally or racially diverse clients.	135	3.36	1.03	153	2.90	1.14	3.59***
To do this job well we need better in-service training than the Bureau has been giving us.	135	3.24	1.15	152	3.64	1.13	-2.97**
No training could prepare you for this job – you can only learn it by doing it.	136	3.59	1.09	154	3.27	1.16	2.44*
I don't know as much as I should to do my job well.	132	2.31	1.08	151	2.27	1.15	0.29

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, ** $p \leq .000$

Table 45 reports results from three questions relating to personal safety issues. Overall, concern for personal safety did not appear to be a major issue for most respondents. In both Ongoing and other services, for example, most disagreed with the statement that they felt unsafe in the neighborhood where their office was located. Most also disagreed that the job often placed them in situations where they feared for their personal safety. One difference between the two groups was that Ongoing services personnel were significantly more likely than those in other services to agree that good security services were in place at their offices.

Table 45. Safety Concerns – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
I don't feel safe in the neighbor-hood where my office is located.	133	2.29	1.15	152	2.17	1.24	0.80
One problem with this job is that it often puts me in situations where I fear for my personal safety.	133	2.62	1.15	150	2.56	1.12	0.42
My organization sees to it that a good security service is in place at my office.	133	3.13	1.22	151	2.79	1.36	2.17*

* $p \leq .05$

A potential buffer to the stress of a demanding job is the extent to which it is seen as rewarding, such as by allowing staff to feel they are doing something useful or meeting their need for personal growth. Results in Table 46 show responses to several such items and present a somewhat mixed picture. In both Ongoing and other services, respondents liked the fact that their jobs are challenging and make them feel they are doing something that matters. To a slightly lesser degree, staff also reported gaining a sense of accomplishment from their work. Respondents in Ongoing were more likely than those in other areas to find opportunities for personal growth in their jobs, but they were more likely to feel frustrated by an inability to see whether their work had any positive effect.

Table 46. Degree to Which Job is Rewarding – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
I get a feeling of success and accomplishment from my work.	133	3.25	0.98	151	3.44	1.12	-1.56
One thing I like about my job is the feeling I'm doing something that really matters.	133	3.75	1.02	152	4.00	1.02	-2.05*
I feel I've lost my idealism and enthusiasm for my job.	133	3.05	1.15	153	2.94	1.20	0.74
This job is frustrating because I seldom get to see whether my work has had any positive effect.	133	3.27	1.09	153	2.94	1.24	2.38*
My job gives me opportunities for personal growth.	133	3.19	1.16	152	2.87	1.14	2.34*
I like the fact that my job is challenging.	133	3.92	0.79	151	3.95	0.96	-0.28

* $p \leq .05$

Results from questions about staff members' sense of attachment or loyalty to the Bureau or their particular agency are shown in Table 47. Staff members in both Ongoing and other service areas reported feeling more committed to their jobs than when they started, disagreed that they felt committed to their particular agency rather than the Bureau, and disagreed that they were just taking the job for the pay until something better appeared. Across service areas, respondents reported that the job was made easier by feeling part that they were part of a team, although those in Ongoing services endorsed this view significantly more strongly. Most staff in both areas disagreed that they remained on the job simply because of loyalty to others in their group, though this viewpoint was more prevalent in Ongoing than in other services.

Table 48 reports results from questions about respondents' immediate supervisors. Note that because results from both worker-level and supervisory staff are included in the table, the figures apply to mid-level managers (supervisors of supervisors) as well as to

Table 47. Attachment to Work Team and/or Agency – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
I feel more committed to my job now than when I started with the Bureau.	133	3.29	1.15	151	3.14	1.16	1.07
I feel committed to my agency but not to the Bureau.	131	2.53	1.09	135	2.53	1.15	0.06
The difficulty of this job is made easier by feeling like I am part of a team.	132	3.47	1.12	151	3.21	1.18	1.93*
I took this job because I need the pay, but I don't plan to stay any longer than necessary.	133	2.50	1.27	152	2.26	1.18	1.66*
It's only the loyalty I have to others in my unit that keeps me on this job.	133	2.32	1.09	152	2.08	1.05	1.93*

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$

those with a job title of "supervisor." Respondents in both service areas reported feeling that they could discuss disagreements openly with their supervisor. However, both also reported that they received conflicting responses from questions asked of different supervisors, and this was especially true of staff in services other that Ongoing. Also, though most respondents considered their supervisors to be good at their jobs, the level of agreement with this statement was significantly lower among non-Ongoing staff, where the overall mean rating was only slightly above a neutral response. This echoes results reported in Table 18, which showed significantly lower satisfaction ratings by non-Ongoing respondents on the AJDI Supervision scale as compared to those in Ongoing.

Table 48. Opinions about Supervision – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
I get conflicting advice from different supervisors when I ask questions about my cases.	126	3.13	1.16	141	3.72	1.28	-3.91*
I feel my supervisor is very good at his or her job.	135	3.84	1.06	153	3.22	1.28	4.40*
I feel I can discuss things openly with my supervisor when we disagree about cases.	133	3.67	1.20	148	3.47	1.38	1.31

* $p \leq .000$

Responses to questions about the difficulty of staff members' jobs in the Bureau and its partner agencies are shown in Table 49. Several findings stand out. First, respondents in both service areas agreed that the demands of their jobs seem to keep increasing, and those in Ongoing agreed with this significantly more strongly than those in other services. In addition, Ongoing staff were significantly more likely to report that their jobs were more difficult than expected, and they were also more likely to feel that things were always in crisis on their jobs. Finally, while respondents in both groups tended to think their caseloads were about the same as everyone else's, both reported some difficulty putting the cases out of their minds after the close of the workday.

Table 49. Job Demands and Difficulty – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
The size of my caseload and its demands are about the same as that of everyone else in my position.	125	3.30	1.22	134	3.36	1.25	-0.35
I am able to "turn off" my cases and not worry about them after work.	133	2.71	1.23	153	2.93	1.15	-1.56
My job is a lot more difficult than I expected.	133	3.50	1.11	152	3.01	1.13	3.74***
One concern I have about my job is that the demands seem to keep increasing.	132	4.27	0.96	152	3.95	1.02	2.70**
A difficult part of my job is the feeling that things are always in crisis.	133	3.50	1.10	151	3.19	1.1	2.40*

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, ***$p \leq .000$

One potential source of job difficulty is the effect of high staff turnover rates on those who remain. Table 50 presents results of three survey questions that addressed this issue. Respondents in both service groups agreed that one problem with their job was that many people didn't stay long enough to learn it well, and the level of agreement with this statement was significantly higher among staff in Ongoing services than those in other areas. Both groups also reported some difficulty dealing with cases passed down to them from others. However, staff in Ongoing were significantly less likely than those in other services to report that service plans were typically disrupted when responsibility for cases was transferred from one staff member to another.

Another possible source of job difficulty is staff involvement with the court system. Table 51 displays results of three questions addressing respondents' perceived quality of their relationship with the court. The picture that arises is one of moderate

Table 50. Consequences of Turnover – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
One problem with this job is that people don't stay long enough to learn it well.	135	4.24	1.00	152	3.86	1.19	2.87*
Every time a case is transferred to a new case manager, that person changes the plan and things start all over.	129	2.78	0.98	122	3.33	1.02	-4.30**
The worst part of my job is dealing with cases passed down to me from someone else.	133	3.33	1.22	148	3.19	1.21	0.98

* $p \leq .005$

dissatisfaction with this relationship. Both groups disagreed somewhat with the statement that their status as professionals was respected by judges and attorneys, and responses were neutral to the statement that treatment they receive in court is a major source of frustration. However, both groups tended to disagree that the court held so much influence over their cases as to largely eliminate the influence of staff. No significant differences were found between respondents in Ongoing and those in other areas on any of the questions relating to court relationships.

Table 51. Court Relations – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
When I go to court, judges and attorneys seem to respect my status as a professional.	133	2.81	1.22	114	2.71	1.30	0.63
The poor treatment I get when I go to court is one of the biggest frustrations of my job.	132	3.08	1.29	108	2.97	1.29	0.62
The court has so much control over my cases that I have little influence on what happens to them.	130	2.74	1.05	123	2.70	1.24	0.27

Table 52 shows results from a set of questions specific to pay and benefits in the Bureau. In one of the most strongly endorsed question of the entire survey, respondents in both Ongoing and other services reported feeling that child welfare employees in other counties have easier cases and better pay. However, as with all questions shown in the

table, respondents in Ongoing were dramatically more dissatisfied than those in other services. Ongoing staff considered their employer's fringe benefits to be worse than those of others, while staff in other services held the opposite view. Finally, respondents in Ongoing felt resentful about perceived pay inequities within the Bureau, while in apparent recognition of the advantage they held, staff in others services disagreed that they were resentful of their agency's rate of pay. In general, these findings mirror those reported in Table 18, where both groups were well below the norm on the AJDI pay satisfaction scale, and respondents in Ongoing were significantly more dissatisfied that those in other services. The results also suggest that staff members are aware of the pay disparities documented in the salary study presented at the beginning of this report.

Table 52. Opinions about Pay and Benefits – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
Child welfare employees in other counties have easier cases and/or better pay.	129	4.36	0.80	143	3.81	1.10	4.70*
My employer offers better fringe benefits than others in the Bureau.	133	2.25	0.90	147	3.12	1.30	-6.43*
I feel resentful because the organization I work for doesn't pay as well as others in the Bureau.	134	3.52	1.18	141	2.72	1.25	5.49*

* $p \leq .000$

Table 53 presents results for a variety of questions asking for staff perceptions about the operation of the Bureau and its partner agencies and how well they support staff efforts. The results offer a mixed picture of content and discontent. For example, across both Ongoing and other service areas, respondents agreed strongly with the statement that jobs in the system could be reorganized to make operations easier and more efficient. Most also felt that administrators did not understand the difficulty of their jobs or take sufficient action to make them easier, and both groups tended to disagree with the statement that administrators were willing to listen to staff complaints or suggestions.

Results presented earlier in the report (Table 10) indicate that more than two-thirds of worker-level staff in both service areas reported spending half or more of their time on paperwork and documentation. This is reflected by agreement from respondents in both groups that they sometimes felt their agency just wants to make them paper pushers. However, with a mean of 3.25 on a 5-point scale in both groups, the level of agreement with this statement is only modestly above a neutral response, suggesting that other concerns may have greater importance for staff than their paperwork burden. One example is the dissatisfaction reported by respondents relative to acknowledgment and promotion of good performance. Most agreed that they received little notice if their work

Table 53. Perceived Organizational Support – All Staff

Item	Ongoing Services (n=136) Valid n	M	SD	Other Services (n=154) Valid n	M	SD	t
It is not clear to me what I need to do in order to receive a promotion or raise from my organization.	132	2.92	1.24	150	3.21	1.39	-1.88*
I want to use my skills as a child welfare professional, but my agency just seems to want me to be a paper pusher.	134	3.25	1.17	151	3.25	1.25	0.60
Jobs in the Bureau could be reorganized to make things easier and more efficient.	134	4.12	0.92	150	3.97	0.93	1.32
Some of my cases require expert advice in areas such as domestic violence or mental health, but I don't have sufficient access to this expertise.	133	3.05	1.07	150	3.05	1.27	0.01
I have benefited from having a mentor in my organization.	128	3.45	1.38	70	2.49	1.53	4.58**
Administrators in the Bureau seem to understand the hard parts of my job and want to make them as easy as possible.	133	1.98	1.07	153	1.93	1.05	0.39
There is an atmosphere in the Bureau that encourages staff to do their best work.	133	2.65	1.14	152	2.48	1.13	1.15
I am encouraged to think creatively in my work.	133	2.97	1.12	153	2.69	1.21	1.86*
No one notices if my cases go well, but I get in trouble fast if something goes wrong.	133	3.68	1.17	151	3.75	1.30	-0.35
Administrators in my organization are willing to listen to complaints or suggestions from staff.	133	2.77	1.19	153	2.63	1.32	0.84
Within the boundaries of law, I am given appropriate opportunity to use my professional judgment with my cases.	133	3.62	0.95	149	3.57	0.92	0.37
Nobody wants to listen if I have a concern or suggestion about how to improve things.	133	2.86	1.15	151	3.07	1.26	-1.40

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .000$

went well but trouble arose quickly if things went wrong, and most disagreed that there was an atmosphere in the Bureau that encouraged their best work.

With respect organizational rules and restrictions, most respondents reported that they were given appropriate opportunity to exercise professional judgment in their work. Many also indicated that they had benefited from having a mentor in their organization. This view was significantly more prevalent among respondents in Ongoing services, however, where more formalized mentoring programs have been implemented.

One type of organizational support that might be offered to staff by the Bureau and its partner agencies is suggested by results in Table 54. To a greater extent that for any other item in the survey, respondents in both Ongoing and other services agreed with the statement that they would like their organization to create advanced practice positions to provide promotion opportunities for more skilled staff. Most were not interested in leaving their current job to take a different one in the Bureau, though respondents in Ongoing were significantly more willing to do so than those in other services. Some interest was also reported regarding opportunities for job-sharing that would enable staff to work part-time. The high standard deviation for this item indicates that some respondents were very enthusiastic about the option while others had little interest.

Table 54. Desire for Alternatives in Job – All Staff

	Ongoing Services (n=136)			Other Services (n=154)			
Item	Valid n	M	SD	Valid n	M	SD	t
I wish my organization would create advanced practice positions as promotion opportunities for staff with high levels of skill.	132	4.37	0.73	151	4.46	0.74	-1.06
I would be happier in my work if I could switch to a different job in the Bureau.	132	2.51	1.07	153	2.17	1.19	2.50*
I would be interested in job sharing with someone so I could work part-time rather than full-time.	126	2.90	1.56	138	3.07	1.74	-0.82

* $p \leq .05$

Multivariate Analyses - Predictors of Job Satisfaction and Intent to Quit

Having compiled considerable information on characteristics and attitudes of staff, the central question remaining to be addressed in the analyses of survey results is the extent to which the data can be used to predict employee satisfaction and prevent future turnover. Toward this end, a series of analyses using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression were completed on job satisfaction and intent to quit.

Potential predictor variables for the regression analyses were organized into theoretically ordered sets then analyzed sequentially in the regression analyses. Results from the literature review were used to identify and classify each variable, and only variables shown in prior research to have some predictive capacity for job satisfaction, intent to quit, or actual turnover were included in each set. Table 55 shows these sets and the variables included in each. Note that job satisfaction, as measured by scores on the AJIG scale, was a dependent variable in the first set of analyses but was tested as a predictor variable in analyses of intent to quit.

The set of variables shown at the bottom of Table 55 represents groups of items from those specially created to gather information about conditions in the Bureau and its partner agencies. As in the process for developing the Directiveness scale described above, items were ordered into conceptual sets and tested to determine their ability to group together and provide a composite score. Criteria such as item-total correlations were used to select items to include or drop from each scale, and scales were retained for subsequent analyses only if they showed acceptable internal consistency and evidence of unidimensionality (i.e, measuring only a single condition or aspect of service). Table 56

Table 55. Variable Sets Tested in Regression Analyses

Set	Variables
Personal Characteristics	Age, gender, race (minority/non-minority), marital status (married/unmarried), number of children, psychological well-being (SWLS score), need for structure (PNS scale score), psychological resilience (PVS-IIIR scores)
Work-Related Characteristics	Education, household income, years of experience in child welfare, perceived knowledge of job (item c13), mastery of job (item c14), enthusiasm for job (item c12j), Ongoing versus other services, commitment to job (item B1b)
Professional Perceptions	Role conflict (RC scale score), role overload (RO scale score), emotional exhaustion (E score), depersonalization (D score), general job satisfaction (AJIG score), organizational commitment (OCQ score), thoughts of quitting (item C17a), loyalty to others in organization (item C12kk), commitment to child welfare (item B1a), knowledge or mastery of job (1them 13, 14), value conflicts on job (item 16)
Organizational Conditions	Coworker support (ADJI People score), supervisor support (ADJI Supervisor score), pay satisfaction (AJDI Pay score), promotion opportunities (AJDI Promotion score), constructive organizational culture (OCI subscale scores), burden of policies and procedures (item C18a), demands of job (items C18i), caseload level (item C18d), amount of work (item C18f), working conditions (itemcC18g), work locus of control (WLOC score)
Bureau-Specific Indicators	Scores from the Safety, Job Rewardingness, Supervisor Relationship, Court Relations, Job Difficulty, and Organizational Support scales.

shows the six scales produced by this process, the number of items and internal consistency of each, and an example item. Internal consistency is measured by coefficient alpha, which ranges between 0 and 1. Values greater than .60 are considered the minimum necessary for research, and this was used as a criterion for including or excluding scales.

Table 56. Summary of Bureau-Specific Scales

Scale	# of Items	Example item	Alpha
Safety	2	I don't feel safe in the neighborhood where my office is located.	.64
Job Rewardingness	6	I get a feeling of success and accomplishment from my work.	.78
Relationship with Supervisor	2	I feel my supervisor is very good at his or her job.	.64
Relationship with the Court	2	The poor treatment I get when I go to court is one of the biggest frustrations of my job.	.86
Job Difficulty	3	One concern I have about my job is that the demands seem to keep increasing.	.60
Organizational Support	7	There is an atmosphere in the Bureau that encourages staff to do their best work.	.82

Regression analyses were first carried out on each set of predictor variables shown in Table 55, first for job satisfaction and then for intent to quit. Both hierarchical and stepwise entry procedures were used in each test to determine whether each predictor contributed meaningfully to the model and the degree of its predictive strength relative to other variables. Tests for potential problems such as multicollinearity were also completed during this process. At the end of each set of tests, variables found to be significantly predictive of the criterion variable (job satisfaction or intent to quit) were retained for inclusion in a final combined analysis.

Table 57 shows results of the final regression analysis on predictors of job satisfaction. For job satisfaction the measure used was the overall score from the Abbreviated Job In General (AJIG) Scale of the Job Description Inventory (JDI). The value for R^2 at the bottom of the table can be interpreted as indicating that about 68 percent of the variation in job satisfaction can be accounted for by the predictor variables in the model. Since R^2 values higher than .50 tend to be rare, this is a noteworthy result. It means that there is reason to expect that efforts to affect the predictor variables which influence job satisfaction of staff may produce useful results. Note that in the table results are reported on 247 cases, due to the fact that missing values for various predictor variables led to the exclusion of about 50 cases. Also, two variables that showed significant predictive ability in initial analyses—years of experience in child welfare and perceived quality of relations with the court—were found not to be predictive in the full model. Because each of these variables included many missing values and thus substantially diminished the number of cases on which the regression analyses could be computed, they were dropped from the final model.

Table 57. Regression Analysis on Job Satisfaction – All Staff (n = 247)

Variable	Regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	t
Constant	8.203		2.456***
Personal Characteristics			
Years of experience in child welfare†			
Work-Related Characteristics			
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS staff member	-0.405	-0.012	-0.293
Initial assessment staff member	0.978	0.054	1.238
Safety Services staff member	2.371	0.091	2.241**
Out-of-Home Care staff member	1.750	0.076	1.839*
Adoptions staff member	1.110	0.048	1.059
Commitment to job	0.470	0.092	2.019**
Professional Perceptions			
Emotional exhaustion (MBI-EE scale)	-0.163	-0.149	-1.956*
Depersonalization (MBI-DP scale)	-0.066	-0.038	-0.751
Organizational commitment (OCQ score)	1.248	0.252	4.818***
Profession values conflict with work	-0.245	-0.031	-0.736
Commitment to field of child welfare	0.163	0.026	0.561
Organizational Conditions			
Role overload (Glisson RO scale)	-0.166	-0.130	-2.013**
Constructive/supportive organizational culture	-0.245	-0.241	-2.288**
Constructive/individualistic organizational culture	0.146	0.198	1.818*
Opportunities for promotion (AJDI-P score)	0.167	0.105	2.296**
Demands of job as potential reason to quit	-0.530	-0.038	-0.826
Burden of policy and procedures as reason to quit	-1.074	-0.073	-1.674*
Work Locus of Control	-0.264	-0.020	-0.415
Bureau-Specific Indicators			
Job rewardingness	2.535	0.272	4.454***
Level of job demands	-0.236	-0.027	-0.534
Organizational supportiveness	-0.010	-0.001	-0.021
Relations with the court †			
$R^2 = .680$, Adj $R^2 = .650$			

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .000$

† Years of experience in child welfare and quality of relationship with the court were significant in initial tests but not in the full model. Because each had a large number of missing values, they were removed from the final version of the model.

Note that, in interpreting results from the table, the value shown in the middle column of numbers is the standardized regression coefficient, which is often referred to as beta. This value is useful because it indicates the overall predictive capacity of the variable in question. That is, variables having the highest absolute value for beta,

regardless of having a negative or positive sign, are those that account for the highest proportion of variation in job satisfaction scores. The negative or positive sign provides information on the direction of change. That is, job satisfaction increases as values for predictor variables go up (positive sign) and decreases as they go down (negative sign).

Within the category of Work-Related Characteristics, initial analyses tested whether any predictive effect appeared for service area, coded as a dichotomous contrast between Ongoing and other services. Results indicated that this contrast was not significantly predictive of job satisfaction, so in subsequent analyses a set of dummy-coded variables was introduced to test whether working in a particular service area was predictive of overall job satisfaction. In this approach, Ongoing services was used as the "reference category," meaning that all other services were tested against that area. Results indicate that working in Safety Services or Out-of-Home Care as opposed to Ongoing Services is predictive of significantly higher job satisfaction. In addition, independent of the effect of service area, staff who reported feeling more committed to their jobs now than when they first started were significantly more likely to have high job satisfaction.

With respect to Professional Perceptions, commitment to one's organization as measured by the OCQ was one of the two most powerful predictors of job satisfaction in the analyses. Results show that the higher one's feelings of commitment toward his/her organization, the higher one's general job satisfaction. Also important is the component of burnout termed Emotional Exhaustion; the more emotionally exhausted a staff member, the lower his/her job satisfaction was likely to be.

Not surprisingly, several variables in the Organizational Conditions category were found to be predictive of job satisfaction. These included role overload, which measures the extent to which staff feel their workload demands interfere with their ability to complete their work effectively. Results indicate that higher role overload scores are significantly predictive of lower job satisfaction. Two dimensions of organizational culture—the extent to which the organization fosters achievement of personal potential and an atmosphere supportive to others—were also predictive of job satisfaction. As expected, being in a culture that enhances opportunities for individual achievement was significantly predictive of job satisfaction. However, in a somewhat counterintuitive finding, being in a climate in which support for others was high was significantly predictive of lower rather than higher job satisfaction. Finally, job satisfaction is significantly increased when opportunities for promotion are seen as good but decreased when those who are considering quitting report that onerous policies and procedures would be a major reason for doing so.

In the final category of predictor variables—those formed from items specifically developed to address conditions in the Bureau and its private agencies, a significant predictor of job satisfaction is the extent to which staff find the job rewarding. Those who agree more strongly with the statements such as "I get a feeling of success and accomplishment from my work" are those more likely to report high overall job satisfaction.

Factors that were *not* found to be significantly predictive of job satisfaction are also worthy of note. For example, contrary to some earlier research, no demographic characteristics of staff were found to be predictive of job satisfaction. In other words, variables such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, or years of experience appeared to have little to do with job satisfaction. Even factors such as disgruntlement about low pay or salary disparities were not significant determinants. Instead, the important questions to ask in planning efforts to improve job satisfaction would involve issues such as how to prevent emotional exhaustion, improve organizational commitment, decrease overload, and increase the ability of staff to find a sense of personal reward from their work.

Table 58 presents results from the second and final regression analysis, which sought to identify factors that predict intent to quit. Table 35 above describes the three-item Intent to Quit (ITQ) scale, and initial analyses were completed on the ITQ composite score. However, previous research has often relied on a single-item indicator of intent to quit, and tests we conducted on each item of the scale showed the first item ("I frequently think about quitting this job") was the strongest contributor to the ITQ score. It was also better predicted by the variables tested in our regression model than the ITQ composite score, so results in Table 58 are based on efforts to account for variation in responses to this single question. Those responses ranged from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree."

As with the previous analysis, the variables shown in the table are those found to be significant predictors in initial analyses of theoretically ordered groups. In some cases, predictors identified in this stage were the same as for job satisfaction, but in other cases they were different. As with job satisfaction, no variables in the Personal Characteristics group (which included demographic indicators) were significantly predictive of intent to quit in the initial analyses, so none were included in the final model. Though it is somewhat lower than in the analyses of job satisfaction, the value of .563 for R^2 (shown at the bottom of the table) indicates that about 56 percent of the variation in intent to quit is accounted for by the predictors in the model. This is again an unusually large amount of predicted variance, and it suggests that efforts to reduce intent to quit that derive from these results have some chance of success.

Under Work-Related Characteristics, a dichotomous variable indicating whether each respondent was in Ongoing versus other services was tested in the model first, but as with job satisfaction it was not significantly predictive of job satisfaction. The same contrast-coded variables for service area that were used in the job satisfaction model were then entered into the analysis. As before, Ongoing services is the reference category against which other service areas were compared. Results indicate no significant predictive power for any of the service areas except the category that included Phone Intake, and the Crisis Response and FISS team members. For these respondents, being in this category was associated with a significantly higher intent to quit than being in Ongoing. This result and the previous finding that being in Ongoing versus all other services was *not* predictive of intent to quit is noteworthy. In recent years turnover problems have been a much greater problem in Ongoing services than in other areas, so the absence of any

Table 58. Regression Analysis on Intent to Quit – All Staff (n = 257)

Variable	Regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	t
Constant	4.778		4.715***
Personal Characteristics			
(none significant in initial tests)			
Work-Related Characteristics			
Phone Intake/CRT/FISS staff member	1.105	0.106	2.346**
Initial assessment staff member	0.038	0.007	0.142
Safety Services staff member	0.410	0.052	1.126
Out-of-Home Care staff member	0.089	0.013	0.273
Adoptions staff member	0.528	0.074	0.146
Professional Perceptions			
Emotional exhaustion (MBI-EE scale)	0.062	0.186	2.199**
Organizational commitment (OCQ score)	-0.291	-0.191	-3.047***
General job satisfaction (AJIG score)	-0.035	-0.114	-1.548
Commitment to field of child welfare	0.005	0.003	0.054
Organizational Conditions			
Role conflict (Rizzo RC scale)	0.018	0.059	0.418
Role overload (Glisson RO scale)	-0.011	-0.028	-0.336
Constructive/individualistic organizational culture	-0.040	-0.179	-1.555
Constructive/motivational organizational culture	0.070	0.208	1.934*
Caseload level as potential reason to quit	0.234	0.051	1.031
Working conditions as potential reason to quit	0.590	0.101	2.099**
Demands of job as potential reason to quit	0.085	0.020	0.391
Bureau-Specific Indicators			
Job rewardingness	-0.563	0.198	2.985***
Level of job demands	0.417	0.158	2.647***
Organizational supportiveness	-0.131	-0.049	-0.779
R^2 = .563, Adj R^2 = .528			

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

predictive effect in these analyses may at first seem contrary to logic. However, it is important to remember that the results reported in Table 58 show the predictive capacity of each variable while *holding constant the effect of all other variables in the model*. In other words, tests of the predictive capacity of service area provide information on whether being in Ongoing Services has an influence on the likelihood of quitting that is exerted over and above the effect of factors such as emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, and others. Results in Table 58 thus indicate that once these factors are accounted for (e.g., once problems such as emotional exhaustion are mitigated) being in Ongoing services is associated with no greater likelihood of turning over than being in any other service area. In fact, after other variables are accounted for, the service area in

which intent to quit is significantly higher than others is the Intake/CRT/FISS component.

Among the most powerful predictors of intent to quit was the respondent's score on the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The more committed respondents were to their organization, the less likely they were to report frequent thoughts of quitting their jobs. This finding is very consistent with that of other studies showing that low organizational commitment is associated with both higher intent to quit (Geurts et al., 1999, Manlove & Guzell, 1997; Michaels & Spector, 1982; Stremmel, 1991) and actual turnover (Bloom, 1996; Michaels & Spector, 1982). Another variable found to play and important role in predicting intent to quit was the degree to which work in the Bureau was seen as personally or professionally rewarding, a factor that has seldom been addressed in prior research. Of slightly less importance but still meaningful was emotional exhaustion, which when high was predictive of greater intent to quit. This is again consistent with previous studies, and indeed in almost every case where emotional exhaustion has been measured it has been shown to be a powerful predictor of both intent to quit and actual turnover (Blankertz & Robinson, 1997; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Manlove & Guzell, 1997; Munn, Barber, & Fritz, 1996; Todd & Deery-Schmitt, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

When asked for reasons why they might quit, employees who indicated working conditions as a reason were also more likely to report more frequent thoughts of quitting. Finally, in the most unexpected finding, intent to quit was associated with respondents' ratings constructive/motivational subscale of the Organizational Culture Inventory. At constructive/motivational culture is one where employees are frequently challenged to do there best, but respondents who rated their agency high on this aspect of organizational culture were more likely to report frequent thoughts of quitting. Placed in the context of other findings, this result may suggest that employees suffering from emotional exhaustion, low organizational commitment, and lack of rewardingness in the nature of their work may respond negatively rather than positively to a challenging organizational culture.

As in the case of job satisfaction, variables *not* identified as significantly predictive of intent to quit are worth noting. As before, demographic characteristics are notable by their lack of ability to predict turnover intention. In the same vein, personal characteristics such as psychological well-being, desire for structure or orderliness, and psychological resilience did not meaningfully differentiate those likely to turnover from those not. Additional analyses may reveal that these factors indeed do play a role, but indirectly through their effects on predictors such as organizational commitment and level of job demands. This will be discussed further in the Conclusions and Recommendation section of the report. For the moment, however, the results imply that the critical determinants of job satisfaction and intent to quit on the part of Bureau employees are not basic characteristics of those employees themselves but characteristics of their work and their organizational environment.

Part 3

Results of Focus Groups and Interviews Regarding Turnover Problems

Prepared by

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph,D.
Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

Introduction and Process

The goal of conducting focus groups and interviews with program staff is to provide more in-depth information on topics of interest than can be obtained by reviewing records or even by conducting more structured staff surveys. Focus groups and interviews allow for staff to describe their concerns and issues in their own words and for the facilitator to ask follow-up questions to ensure that the information provided has been correctly understood. The process provides a rich source of qualitative information that supplements and enhances the data gleaned from staff surveys and from available records and reports.

The bulk of the focus groups and interviews were conducted during the weeks of February 14th and 21st, 2005. Nine formal focus group sessions were conducted, one for each site's ongoing case managers (5 sessions); one for the safety service workers at Sites 1, 2, and 3; one for the initial assessment, intake, and crisis response team staff; one for the out-of-home workers at Lutheran Social Services; and one for the adoption staff at Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. All these sessions were facilitated by Dr. Andy Reitz of CWLA, with participant comments transcribed by Ginnie Waldron, also with CWLA.

In addition to the focus groups, Dr. Reitz conducted 10 small-group interviews with a range of staff from the Bureau and its partner agencies. The format for these sessions was similar to that for the focus groups, though they were smaller and less formal, with Dr. Reitz both facilitating and taking notes. These sessions included the following staff:

- Ongoing case management supervisors from all five sites
- Safety service supervisors from Sites 1-4
- Out-of home supervisors
- Program directors/managers from CFCP and La Causa
- The BMCW deputy director and all five BMCW site managers

A total of 143 staff participated in the focus groups and interviews. The staff breakdown is as follows:

- Ongoing case managers (49 of 205, 24%)
- Mentors (5 of 9, 56%)
- Ongoing case management supervisors (27 of 33, 82%)
- Safety service workers (9 of 32, 28%)
- Safety service supervisors (4 of 5, 80%)
- Initial assessment, intake, and crisis response team (10 of 92, 11%)
- Out-of-home workers (4 of 55, 7%)
- Out-of-home supervisors (5 of 8, 63%)
- Adoption workers (13 of 33, 39%)
- Site managers (5 of 5, 100%)
- Other agency managers and directors (12)

As the numbers indicate, there was a bias toward including workers and supervisors that provide ongoing case management services (over 50% of the total participants). This reflects specific concern with the high rates of turnover in these positions. All major staff groups were represented, however, to ensure a broad picture of the current workforce issues.

All participation in the focus groups and interviews was voluntary, and staff signed consent forms indicating their agreement to participate. Participants in all the focus groups, and most of the interviews, were recruited through posted notices and through direct invitation by assigned administrative staff at the various sites. Interviews with the 17 managers and directors were conducted as part of three already scheduled management meetings. All nine of the focus group sessions were 90 minutes in length. The ten small-group interview sessions lasted from 60-90 minutes each. Following a brief introduction regarding the nature and goals of the session, each participant was given the opportunity to leave the session. If they chose to remain, they were asked to indicate their agreement to participate by signing the consent form (see attached). The sessions themselves were broken into four sections, with each section addressing one of the following four topics. Participants were asked to identify:

1. The primary reasons workers like their jobs and choose to stay.
2. The specific characteristics of the work (i.e., the job itself) that are problematic and are likely causes of turnover.
3. The specific characteristics of their organization (and of the Bureau) that are problematic and likely causes of turnover.
4. The specific changes/actions that would have a positive impact on retention of workers.

The facilitator's role was to begin each section by posing the initial question, to manage the flow of the conversation to ensure everyone an opportunity to speak, to follow-up with clarifying questions when necessary, and to manage the time so that all the sections would be covered. The facilitator also began with a list of seven critical topics (those shown in the research to be highly correlated with high turnover rates) that

had to be addressed during each session. These were supervision, salary and benefits, workload, training, opportunities for advancement, clarity of expectations, and support/recognition. If these areas were not raised during a session, or if the facilitator did not feel they had been adequately addressed, the facilitator raised them specifically. This specific form of questioning was needed on only one occasion, as these critical topics were raised spontaneously in every session.

Interpreting Focus Group and Interview Data

The results of the focus groups and interviews consist of transcripts of nearly 30 hours of conversations with almost 150 people, a veritable mountain of information. This report will make no attempt to provide an exhaustive list of every piece of information that was shared. To be useful, even understandable, the information has to be carefully analyzed, organized in a systematic way, and reduced to the major themes and priorities. To do this, we carefully reviewed the written transcripts and notes, searched for the issues that were raised most frequently and endorsed most strongly by the various groups of participants, and then organized them into meaningful categories. While there is clearly a subjective element in such an analysis, we are extremely confident that the results presented here are an accurate presentation of the comments made by the participants, especially given the consistency with which the issues were raised across diverse groups of workers, supervisors, and managers.

It should also be pointed out that the primary purpose of the focus groups and interviews was to identify the reasons for the relatively high rate of turnover among worker-level staff, not to conduct an overall assessment of the Bureau's strengths and weaknesses. As such, there is a great deal more emphasis in this report on what staff believe are problems within the organization than on what is working well. This emphasis should not be interpreted as suggesting that the Bureau, its partner agencies, and its staff are not doing a great deal of excellent work with the County's children and families. They certainly are. The emphasis on problems and issues is dictated solely by the nature of the task assigned.

One additional issue needs to be raised to consumers of this report regarding the nature of data from focus groups and interviews. It must always be remembered that focus groups are not designed to determine the *facts* of any particular situation. They are designed to elicit staff's *perceptions* regarding the topics under discussion. In highly charged and problematic situations, it is possible, even likely, that staff perceptions and the "facts of the case" (as seen by administrators, for example) may vary quite widely from each other. But this does not diminish the credibility or usefulness of the focus group information. When staff and administrators agree that a certain problem exists, collaborative problem solving to address the issue can begin immediately. When there is disagreement regarding the facts, the disagreement itself becomes the initial problem that must be solved. Getting on the same page regarding the issue (i.e., listening carefully to each other) may be all that is needed. In other cases, it will clarify the nature of the issue so that true problem solving can begin.

Primary Findings

Why Workers Choose to Stay

In spite of the many difficulties that will be discussed in the later sections of this report, staff, throughout the focus groups and interviews, consistently displayed a powerful professional commitment to the children and families they serve and to the important work they do. The workforce is strongly committed to the agency mission and universally identified the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the children and families as the primary force driving their decision to work in child welfare. They draw great professional and personal satisfaction from the assistance and support they are able to provide to their children and families, as well as the relationships they are able to develop with them over time. The staff also place a high value on the opportunity to work along side dedicated teammates, co-workers, and supervisors who are often their primary sources of support and assistance. Many staff identified these relationships as the primary reason they stay, instead of looking for other similar work. While the job is universally acknowledged as a highly stressful and difficult one, staff also appreciate the variety and range of the work they do. They enjoy the challenge, the opportunities to demonstrate their skills and abilities in constantly new and different circumstances, and the many opportunities they have to enhance their existing skills and develop new ones.

Priority Issues Related to Turnover

As described above, the focus groups and interviews generated a great deal of information regarding worker opinions and impressions of their jobs. The following analysis is not intended as an all-inclusive presentation of those perspectives. Rather, it presents a summary of the most salient comments and suggestions related to the retention of worker-level staff. We used four basic criteria in deciding which issues would be covered in this report—the frequency with which issues were raised, the importance attributed to the issues, the consistency with which the issues were raised across the range of staff interviewed, and the relevance of the issues to improving worker retention. Our careful analysis of all the transcripts and notes identified the following eight issues as most critical at this point in time: (1) compensation, (2) support for new workers, (3) opportunities for advancement, (4) supervision, (5) role clarity across units, (6) workload (7) training and (8) worker morale. The following provides an overview of staff comments regarding each of these issues and then presents a series of recommended action steps to address them in practice. It should be noted that, with one exception (i.e., compensation), no attempt has been made to prioritize the eight issues at this point. We believe that all eight areas will need to be addressed over the long term. Specific short-term priorities will need to be developed in conjunction with the Bureau, its partner agencies, and state leaders based on data from other sources and their intimate knowledge of the organization's operation.

1. Compensation

Worker dissatisfaction with their compensation appears directly correlated with the data from the earlier salary study. Workers in positions with higher average salaries (i.e., supervisors and state workers) were relatively satisfied with their compensation. Workers in positions with mid range average salaries (e.g., adoption and out-of-home care workers) were less satisfied (but tended not to raise salary as the primary retention issue, just one of several). Workers in positions with the lowest average salaries (i.e., ongoing case managers and safety service workers) were extremely dissatisfied and raised a number of issues related to compensation. Regardless of position, however, staff throughout the Bureau (including managers, supervisors, and workers) strongly agreed that current compensation for ongoing case managers was an important factor in the high turnover rate for those workers.

Many ongoing case managers and safety service workers spoke quite passionately about the conflict between their desire to continue the important work they do and the problems they had trying to make ends meet on the salary they were paid. Several commented about being forced to take on second jobs and a number indicated that they are living with parents or relatives because, just out of college, they couldn't afford both a car and an apartment of their own on their salary. Staff in these positions are also acutely aware of the significant gap between their compensation level and the compensation of the Bureau's state workers and of workers in surrounding counties, which contributes to their feeling under-valued and under-appreciated and heightens the morale problems described below.

Specific compensation issues raised by workers included the following:

- Very low starting salaries
- Low recent annual raises
- Lack of a clear system to enable projections of how their salaries will increase over time (e.g., a salary step system)
- Lack of a career ladder with opportunities for increased compensation (including salary increments for certification, degrees, etc.)
- No overtime pay (these were direct comparisons to state workers)
- Poor benefit packages and high insurance co-pays
- Problems with equitable implementation, though not the idea, of agency merit pay systems (though several staff questioned the relevance of merit increments in an environment when total raises were so low)

2. Support for New Workers

Research on retention of workers strongly suggests that the decision to stay with an organization is very strongly influenced by worker experiences during the first weeks and months of employment. Without even realizing it, workers make very early judgments about whether the nature of the job, the organizational climate, and the treatment of staff are consistent with their long-term expectations and needs. This is especially true for fast-paced, high-stress jobs like those in child welfare. Staff at

all levels consistently described the first months on the job as overwhelming. No matter how well educated or trained new workers are, there is a tremendous amount to learn and, given the need to rapidly assign new workers to open cases, precious little time to learn it. The issue is even more critical for workers who come to child welfare fresh out of college, with little other work experience. Throughout the focus groups, the ongoing case managers expressed a high level of appreciation for the assistance and support they received from both mentors and supervisors during their early months of employment. Their only criticism was that such help was not always available, as both mentors and supervisors have a wide range of additional duties and responsibilities that must also be addressed. These statements mirrored comments made by both supervisors and mentors in their focus groups and interviews, as they frequently expressed frustration that other priorities (including covering cases during periods when turnover has resulted in significant vacant case manager positions) often made it difficult for them to attend sufficiently to the training and support of new workers.

3. **Opportunities for Advancement**

While newer workers are most interested in getting the help they need to perform required job functions, the decision of more experienced workers to remain with the Bureau often depends more on their assessment of the extent to which longer term options for potential advancement and professional development are available. Workers identified two primary issues in this area.

First, they do not feel that the Bureau and its partner agencies place sufficient emphasis on professional development for workers, especially those who have completed the initial training. Workers expressed a consistent desire for more advanced training programs, as well as more opportunities to participate in conferences and training offered outside the typical training. The goal of these activities would be to prepare staff for internal promotions (e.g., training in supervisory skills) as well as to enhance staff skills in specialty areas related to their direct service work. A second staff development area concerns support for graduate-level training for workers. Workers were clearly appreciative of the Title IV-E stipend program available at UWM, but most expressed that they felt unable to take advantage of that offering due to financial limitations. There was broad support among staff for increased availability and funding for part-time graduate study leading to the MSW degree (and some interest in alternative, related master's degrees). This would allow workers to remain employed full time, but still make consistent progress on their long-term professional development. In discussing this issue, staff also indicated that some increased scheduling flexibility would be needed for them to take full advantage of these opportunities.

A second staff concern, one directly related to staff retention, was staff's view that there were few opportunities for promotional advancement within the Bureau. Staff indicated that in most areas, the only promotional opportunity available was to move into a supervisory position, which, in many areas, are available only

infrequently. Strong support was expressed throughout the focus groups and interviews for what staff referred to as "advanced practice" positions, which would enable highly skilled and experienced staff to move into more advanced worker positions that carried additional responsibilities and a somewhat higher level of compensation. They strongly endorsed the concept of building a "career ladder" for workers that would make this form of advancement possible.

4. Supervision

In nearly all cases, workers spoke positively about the competence of their supervisors and the quality of the supervision they received. They also clearly recognized and appreciated the important roles (e.g., education, training, monitoring and support) that supervisors play in helping workers successfully master their jobs and navigate the system. As on worker put it, "Poor supervision would make the job intolerable." This area is an important current strength for the Bureau, as the retention literature often cites supervisors as critical mediators of worker retention, in both positive and negative directions.

Workers, however, did identify two issues that they viewed as confusing and sometimes problematic in their relationships with supervisors. The first concerns the issue of inconsistent expectations and requirements. Numerous workers, who have worked with more than one supervisor during their tenure (or who have needed assistance from a supervisor other than their own due to illness or vacation), described situations where there were significant differences, even direct conflict:

- In recommendations for how a specific case issue should be handled
- In expectations regarding what constitutes acceptable documentation
- In whether, and if, workers could flexibly schedule work assignments

While no one considered these differences to be major problems in and of themselves, they clearly did raise questions for workers, who tended to view them, not as indicative of various supervisor styles and preferences, but rather as evidence of a lack of clear expectations or guidance regarding how these issues should be handled. While the supervisors did not describe this issue in the same way, they frequently described feeling as if it's almost impossible to keep up with all the policy changes and that it's hard to ever know whether you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, which adds considerably to the stress they feel. One supervisor described it as "policy by memo," with no one place where all the updates are maintained and readily available. They clearly understood how this could confuse workers.

A second criticism of supervision (which workers discriminated from criticism of their individual supervisors) relates to the balance between the various supervisory roles. The workers tended to view their supervisors as providing three primary functions: monitoring for compliance, worker education and training, and worker support. In general, both supervisors and workers feel as if the current culture and operation of the Bureau requires an extremely heavy emphasis on the compliance aspects of supervision, with little time available for the education, training, and

support functions. Not surprisingly, workers tend to be significantly less satisfied with supervision that focuses on their compliance (or worse yet, their lack of it) with documentation and other requirements, and more satisfied with supervision that focuses on worker support and development. When questioned further on this point, workers and supervisors were both clear that they understand, and even endorse, the need for attention to compliance issues. Both are concerned, however, that compliance demands seem to have almost totally overwhelmed and replaced the other supervisory functions.

5. Role Clarity Across Units

The Bureau is a complex and multi-faceted operation, involving several agencies, each with their own organizational structure, and a multitude of staff roles and functions, which inter-relate and overlap in a great many ways. In an ideal situation, such staff interrelatedness can produce a great many benefits both for the clients and for the staff as well. When an organization is struggling, however, such complexity often seems to do little more than create increased opportunities for disagreement, frustration, and conflict. During the focus groups and interviews, workers representing every program component identified their own specific version of this problem, which occurs at those points where two staff roles intersect (e.g., when an ongoing case manager is working with a child placed in out-of-home care, when an initial assessment worker is designing an intervention plan that will be implemented by a safety service worker). Staff described the problem in many ways, but it can probably be best characterized in the following ways:

- Staff perceive a number of areas where there is a lack of clear boundaries governing what staff are responsible for certain activities.
- In some cases, staff are unhappy with the way the boundaries have been set and would like to see them reevaluated.
- When staff feel that someone in another staff role is not meeting one of their responsibilities, they have little confidence that the issue can be addressed productively.

As described earlier, these problems are experienced by workers throughout the system, but they seem most acutely felt by the ongoing case managers. They described two types of situations that cause them the most frustration. The first is when they are held accountable for outcomes by the court and the lawsuit that they feel powerless to address (e.g., the length of time it takes to find a foster or adoptive home for a child). The second is when they feel they must do work that is, or should be, someone else's responsibility (e.g, medical and dental visits for a child in out-of-home care).

6. Workload

Workload is an important issue for workers, but except during the first several months of employment, it does not seem to be a primary contributor to worker turnover. Early in their careers, workers, particularly ongoing case mangers,

described an almost constant feeling of being overwhelmed, never caught up, and unable to spend nearly enough time in face-to-face contact with their children and families. More experienced workers, however, described fewer problems in these areas and attributed that shift to having become more efficient, figuring out the shortcuts, and setting better priorities. Overall, though, workers identified three areas where they felt improvements could be made: caseload, work hours, and paperwork/documentation.

Generally speaking, workers felt that the Bureau and its partner agencies had done a good job of keeping caseload size to manageable numbers. The only time this becomes an issue is when staff vacancies are high and significant numbers of cases need to be covered for short periods of time. While staff view this as problematic and somewhat frustrating, they understand it as a short-term, occasional situation, rather than a serious, long-term problem. A number of staff, however, expressed problems with simply counting cases as the measure of caseload size. They noted that the current method doesn't account for the number of children on a case or the types or severity of the problems encountered (e.g., a teen runaway), both of which can have a tremendous impact on the amount of time a worker must devote to a single case. As a result, two workers, each with a caseload of ten cases, could have a widely varying workload. While workers acknowledged that this averages out over time (and that their supervisors sometimes step in to "protect" them from getting more cases when they already have several high intensity cases) they would like to see an attempt made to assign cases with more of these other factors in mind.

Most workers agreed that it is very difficult to manage their jobs within the prescribed 40-hour work week, especially during one's first year of employment. However, more than the number of hours, the unpredictability of emergencies seemed to be more of an issue. While not a weekly occurrence, staff describe this as problematic in terms of planning personal time, taking care of family responsibilities, or enrolling in evening graduate classes. Interestingly, more experienced staff seem to have figured out how to manage these situations with minimal disruption and do not seem to consider it a serious issue (in fact, many experienced ongoing case managers consider the flexibility the job offers as a significant plus).

Child welfare work, especially in the current environment, inevitably requires a great deal of documentation. And not surprisingly, it is not the part of the work that child welfare workers prefer and is, thus, a frequent source of worker dissatisfaction. During the focus groups and interviews, workers complained about spending large amounts of their time on documentation and paperwork (50% or more in many cases), as opposed to being engaged helping children and families. They also expressed concern that the paperwork seems to grow continually ("none ever goes away"), that much of it is redundant, and that some is never even read. They did, however, also recognize the importance and need for much of the documentation that is required and many of their comments were more oriented about how to make the process more streamlined and worker friendly, especially for more inexperienced workers. Clearly, the workers favor a review of paperwork functions, with an eye toward

eliminating any such work that is no longer needed and identifying tasks that could be combined to eliminate redundancies. Staff also indicated that such a review should include all required paperwork (both agency- and Bureau-required). Staff also expressed some frustration that, due to the computer-based nature of much of the documentation, they were unable to do that work anywhere except at the office. Several suggested that computers and a space to work at court would be very helpful, since workers often spend large amounts of time there waiting for hearings. Others indicated that they would appreciate the opportunity and flexibility of being able to complete paperwork in the evenings and on their home computers, but are currently unable to do so.

7. Training

Training serves at least two important functions in organizations like the Bureau and its partner agencies: it is an essential component of preparing people to do their jobs well, and it is an important way that administration communicates its interest in its workers long term professional development so they will stay over the long term.

Unfortunately, it is a rare situation when agency workers feel that either of these goals is being adequately addressed, and the Bureau is no exception. Probably the most critical worker issue with training is their concern that much of the training is not sufficiently focused on the actual day-to-day work that must be done. In their words, training is often "too theoretical," "not practical," or even "irrelevant," and sometimes it is also "poorly timed," that is, provided well after the skills have already been mastered in other ways.

Several other more specific issues arose in relation to training. These included:

- The critical need for training in all facets of the court experience (several comments were made about a previous training that was considered excellent, but is no longer being offered).
- The need for more targeted training on effective and efficient completion of documentation requirements.
- The perception that there is little current training that addresses the needs of safety service workers.
- The lack of training in supervisory skills.
- The relative lack of advanced training in direct service skills.

In summary, staff expressed a strong need to upgrade current training efforts, with an emphasis on training that focuses first on the skills needed to perform the basics of the job and then on more advanced, developmental topics.

8. Worker Morale

One of the most striking findings from the focus groups and interviews was the low level of worker morale. This was most obvious with the ongoing case managers, but it existed to a significant extent throughout the range of direct worker and supervisory positions. In general, workers throughout the system felt underappreciated for their efforts (by the Bureau, partner agencies, courts, clients, and by the community). They commented often about feeling that their skills and commitment were not respected and that they were not trusted to make decisions. They described the system as overwhelmingly focused on compliance issues, almost to the exclusion of staff support and professional development, and punitive in response to perceived failures and shortcomings. Many staff described a high level of alienation from the Bureau and agency management, and more than a few openly expressed little hope that their feedback and suggestions would be listened to or acted upon in any significant way.

Ongoing case managers, in particular, often described their jobs as temporary or transitional, as entry level jobs that were stepping stones to other, better positions; a good training ground, perhaps, but not a place one would choose to work in over the long term. Several openly indicated that they had already decided to leave child welfare, had their applications out for multiple other jobs, and would be leaving as soon as they had secured other work in the field. They felt as if the Bureau and its partner agencies had simply given up trying to address their issues and that the system viewed them as expendable, disposable commodities. In addition to the obvious morale problems created by such a situation, it also results in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, the more everyone thinks and talks about the fact that new workers won't stay long, the less likely they are to stay. One worker illustrated the insidious nature of this issue when she reported that, early in her initial training, one of the trainers made a "joke" that half the people in the room wouldn't still be working in child welfare in six months.

It should be noted that staff morale is a different type of issue from the others that are addressed in this report. That is, unlike the other areas, there is no simple or direct intervention that targets improvements in staff morale directly. Rather, it changes slowly as the result of interventions that target the more specific issues that staff have identified. Staff morale can be affected, however, by the manner in which the interventions are implemented, by the process that is followed. Several specific process-related ideas are provided in the recommendations section of the report.

Part 4

Focus Group Findings: Education and Career Issues

Prepared by

Susan Mayer, Ph,D.

Chapin Hall Center for Children
University of Chicago

Summarized here are the findings from the four focus groups convened by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (UWM). This section of the project report is organized as follows. It begins with a description of the research method, which includes a brief discussion of how focus group findings should be interpreted. We then turn to the findings, which are presented in four sections. The first addresses on participants' educational and career aspirations, focusing in particular on intentions to earn the MSW. The second findings section addresses participants' perceptions of barriers to attending graduate school and includes subsections that specifically address the UWM Title IV-E and part-time programs. The third section presents thoughts on whether getting the MSW pays off professionally in tangible rewards such as promotions and salary increases. The fourth findings section broadens the "pay-off" theme to sketch what turns out to be a fairly critical assessment of whether social work practice fits into work at the Bureau and its partners. Recommendations that come out of the focus group data analysis appear in the "Recommendations" section for the entire report.

Four focus groups were held with worker-level Bureau employees to determine the educational and career aspirations of these staff, particularly whether they plan to obtain the MSW, any barriers they perceive in returning to school, and their perceptions about the social work programs offered by UWM. UWM provides Master's level education in Social Work to Bureau employees in several ways - the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program, the newly initiated part-time program offered at BMCW sites, and through its enrollment in our regular Master's program. The difficulty of recruiting students into the Title IV-E program over the past few years has been of concern and contributed to including these focus groups in the overall study.

Method

Sample

Group one ("Ongoing" Group) consisted of case managers working in Ongoing Services from across all vendor sites. No one in this group held an MSW degree. The

group was convened on April 5, 2005 with nine (9) voluntary participants. Dr. Steven McMurtry and Dr. Susan Rose from UWM and Dr. Susan Mayer from Chapin Hall co-facilitated this group.

Group two ("Mixed Group") consisted of case managers and workers employed in Bureau programs other than Ongoing Services. No one in this group held an MSW degree. Nine (9) participants working in Safety Services, Phone Intake, Initial Assessment, Adoption, and Licensing attended this group which was conducted on April 7, 2005.

Group three ("Supervisor Group") consisted of supervisors and managerial level staff working for the Bureau or its partner agencies across all of the five sites. Supervisors were asked not only for their own perceptions, but also for their understanding of their subordinates' aspirations and views of the UWM MSW programs. Eight (8) employees volunteered for this group which was held April 12, 2005. All but two of the eight participants either hold the degree or are currently in the UWM MSW program. In addition, Dr. Susan Mayer attended this group.

Group four ("Alumni Group") consisted of graduates of UWM's Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program, whether employed by the BMCW or any of its vendor sites. The fourth focus group was convened with six (6) alumni and was conducted on May 5, 2005. Delores Andre, a graduate of the first CWTP, was contracted to act as facilitator for this group due to her experience with both the training program and the Bureau. It was expected that she would be able to assist in developing "probe" questions to further the discussion. The focal topics in this group included perceptions about the application and selection process for the IV-E program, to what degree the program met their expectations, the adequacy of the available financial support, changes they would make to the curriculum, and how well the program prepared them for child welfare work. It is important to note that some of the alumni attended the IV-E program while working for the county, prior to the creation of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, when the funding arrangements for the IV-E were different than they are today.

The recruitment strategy used for the focus groups resulted in a self-selected, purposive sample. Purposive sampling can be very useful in reaching an identified sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. With this type of sample, it is likely to obtain the opinion of the identified population, but also likely to overweight subgroups, i.e. those with a "gripe" or those with an overly positive experience.

The focus groups were conducted by Frances Pitt and Noor Jawad from Frances Pitt & Associates in Milwaukee at the current Title IV-E field unit, located on the first floor of Site 5 at 70th and Greenfield. This location is separate from any of the Bureau sites, has a separate entrance, and provided privacy for those in attendance. Frances Pitt & Associates were contracted to conduct the focus groups because of their experience in focus group methodology, their connection to the community, and their lack of formal connection to either the Bureau or to UWM.

Potential volunteers for the first three focus groups were first sent an email from the DHFS Administrator and Director of the BMCW explaining the purpose of the groups and the conditions under which the groups would be conducted. In addition, the consent to participate was included in this email. Participants were advised to read this consent, sign it, and bring it to the group if they wished to participate. Potential volunteers for the Alumni group were both emailed and contacted by phone as a number of these persons were no longer employed by the Bureau or one of its vendor sites. Current Bureau employees were advised that they would be allowed to take time from their regular duties; however, participation was voluntary and they would receive no monetary remuneration for their participation.

The groups were intended to include between eight and twelve persons each and were expected to last between from 1.5 to 2 hours. Volunteers were invited participate by answering a few questions about the location of their job, type of job (IA, SS, OG, etc.) and basic demographic information. These questions were submitted by email or postal mail to UWM researchers and were used to ensure a mix of characteristics and experiences among focus-group participants in case more persons volunteered than could be accommodated in each group. However, all persons who volunteered were invited to participate, reflecting a convenience sample for each group.

Before each group began, the elements of informed consent were explained verbally and participants were asked to submit the signed consent forms to the facilitators. Refreshments were served to each group. Questions for each focus group (see Appendix B) were developed by the researchers in consultation with Frances Pitt and Noor Jawad and were subsequently reviewed by the Steering Committee. The questions focused on educational aspirations, barriers to education, and incentives to seeking an MSW.

Data Handling and Preparation

All four focus groups were audio-recorded, and verbatim transcripts of the discussion were prepared. The transcripts were analyzed using atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis program that allows for the coding of text segments according to their thematic content. Prior to the development of the coding scheme, Dr. Mayer read through the transcripts to identify key themes so that appropriate codes could be developed.

Interpreting Focus Group Data

Before presenting the findings, it may be helpful to consider briefly what focus groups can and cannot tell us. The strength of the approach, as is true for other qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing, is that it provides richer detail than, say, responses on a survey. Conversation among peers also tends to bring up issues that are difficult to capture with a short-answer question, or that may not arise in an interview between the researcher and a single subject. In addition, participants listen and react to each others' remarks and may have their own thinking expanded or clarified as they listen to others, and their agreement—or disagreement—may illuminate important distinctions or variations within a broad point of view.

Focus groups also have limitations. One is that talkative participants may dominate and be the source of a disproportionate number of comments.[2] Another important potential limitation that applies to this project is that participants consist only of volunteers; this introduces the possibility of self-selection bias. For example, if staff who are unhappy with their jobs or critical of the Bureau are more likely to volunteer, the discussion may give rise to many negative comments. Or, it may be that those who wish to pursue the MSW are more likely to volunteer than are those without such aspirations, because they want to have input into graduate programs they are interested in and intend to enter. Because the present project includes a survey, the focus group data should be treated as providing important detail and an interpretive context for the survey data. However, focus group data should not be construed to suggest a quantitative estimate of the prevalence of a particular point of view among all staff at the Bureau and its partner agencies. It may be that a viewpoint that emerges strongly in the focus groups is indeed widely held, but the focus group data *by themselves* do not allow that conclusion to be made.

To the Reader

Although we have presented the findings in four separate sections, the themes raised in each section overlap with those discussed in the other sections. Educational aspirations are not entirely divorced from career aspirations, and the latter are deeply linked to participants' perceptions about the difficulties and rewards of working for the Bureau. Thus, the separation of the findings discussions should be understood as a device used for the convenience of the reader. It is not meant to suggest rigid boundaries between the issues covered in each one.

Educational and Career Aspirations

All groups except the UWM Title IV-E program alumni were asked about their educational and career aspirations, although participants in the latter group occasionally spoke on this topic as well. However, most of the findings presented in this section are from the non-alumni focus groups; exceptions to that will be noted.

Aspirations for Earning the MSW

The opening question in the three non-alumni focus groups asked participants about their aspirations, if any, for obtaining the MSW. Supervisors also were asked about their subordinates' educational aspirations. The majority of participants who do not yet hold the degree indicated that they are interested in earning it. However, case

[2] A skilled facilitator should be able to minimize this possibility. However, because the transcripts do not identify the specific participants throughout the session—that would require that the transcriber recognize and consistently distinguish between the voices of eight or ten strangers—the researcher cannot verify with precision just what proportion of the conversation came from which participants. Dr. Mayer attended two of the four focus groups. Her notes kept track of how many individuals spoke on a given topic, in order to avoid such problems as misinterpreting a lengthy exchange between two people as separate comments from numerous individuals. Even where such notes are unavailable, the context of the discussion may provide clues as to when the speaker changes. In addition, Dr. Mayer had copies of the audio recordings and checked for changes of voice between adjacent passages of text. Thus, care was taken to minimize the likelihood of quoting the same person more than once with regard to any specific issue or theme.

managers from Ongoing Services are more likely to say they intend to pursue the MSW than are workers in other services: Nearly all Ongoing Services case managers express the intention to pursue the MSW, but the reaction among non-supervisory staff from other services is mixed. All but two of the supervisors already hold the MSW or are currently enrolled in an MSW program; both supervisors who do not hold the degree express an interest in earning it. Supervisors' reports of their subordinates' aspirations suggest a range of aspirations: Some staff already have the degree, a few are in school or actively applying, and others have either not clearly expressed their intentions or have indicated reasons for postponing graduate school.

A few participants in the Ongoing or mixed services groups stated that they already had applied and been accepted to the MSW program at UWM and are either preparing to begin classes in June or are waiting to see if they would receive Title IV-E support. Other staff who express an interest in getting the degree, or who said their subordinates were interested, are uncertain as to when the return to school would occur, citing a variety of reasons for postponing graduate school. These include the intention to get more job experience, concerns about finances and family responsibilities, and the lack of flexibility to work and attend school at the same time.

> [B]efore I even graduated with my undergraduate I knew that I was going to go on to get my MSW. But [the faculty at my undergraduate program] said that field experience is very important, so I think that's why I didn't go on right away. . . . I knew that I wanted to be in the field at least a year, and now I'm approaching my year and haven't applied, but I'm really thinking that it is pretty hard to, I mean I don't want to take out a bunch of loans, and I want to still be financially okay since I am, you know, not dependent on my parents anymore. So I'm just kind of, maybe waiting around for a Title IV-E program to apply next year.

> I've got two small children myself, so if I didn't have my children I think, okay I'll do it sooner but with my children, you know what, that's going to have to wait because my family comes first. . . . I do plan on pursuing it, just not at this particular time, you know, if I didn't have that situation right now.

> I supervise four. One just got her MSW last December; one is applying for the next round for MSW; the other one has a family, and so it's ruled out for her because she says her family comes first. The other one is pregnant now and is starting a family and has ruled it out because it kind of seems like school, work, and family don't mix. But if you have just family and just work, or just school and just work, and don't have that family, you can mix it. But once you put those three factors in, it gets really difficult for people.

A few individuals indicated that they have no inclination toward getting the MSW. However, because their decisions are related closely to their perceptions as to

whether or not having the degree pays off professionally, their comments will be taken up in the "Benefit/Cost" section, following the discussion of barriers.

Career Aspirations

Because the central goal of the focus groups was to determine interest in the MSW and identify how the UWM Title IV-E program could better serve Bureau staff, most of the statements about career aspirations were made in the context of aspirations for earning the MSW. There are two implications for the findings. One is that most of the findings on career aspirations are based on statements by staff who have yet to earn the MSW, or by supervisors talking about their subordinates. The second is that it can be very difficult to disentangle career and educational aspirations because staff make educational and career decisions in tandem. For example, to the degree that staff believe they need the MSW to advance, their assessment of the advantages of the degree are shaped by their perceptions of whether or not the degree "pays off" professionally. Two aspects of staff's career aspirations are important for this study. One goes to whether or not staff plan to remain at the Bureau The other addresses what job levels staff aspire to. We will begin with the second of these.

<u>Moving Up – Or Not</u>

Career advancement was discussed most often in terms of the typical career path at the Bureau or its partner agencies—from case manager (or equivalent worker-level staff) to supervisor, from supervisor to program director. However, sometimes aspirations were expressed in terms of wanting to improve the child welfare system and did not refer to specific positions or titles. Participants describe careers outside of the Bureau in terms of the fields or types of work they are interested in, not job titles and promotions per se.

Aspirations to move up the career ladder are voiced more often than are aspirations to remain at the case management level. But the reasons for wanting to advance are not always explicit. It may be that some individuals have internalized the idea that a successful professional career is marked by increasing responsibility or advancement to management, and their expectations for themselves—and their employers—are shaped by this idea. Speaking of a subordinate, one supervisor stated that this individual had made it plain that remaining on the job was contingent upon having advancement opportunities.

> I know one is being promoted to a mentor, but he had pretty much said if there was no advancement opportunity, he wasn't going to stay around forever. And I don't blame people because when you have your master's degree, you're not going to be a case manager for your whole life. I mean some people can be content and do that, but I personally could not.

Others frame their professional aspirations in terms of a desire to effect systemic change or otherwise improve the system.

> I'm at a point now where I can't go any further unless I do get a master's, and I do want to be a supervisor, and then after that I do want to be a program director, and I do not want to go more administrative. I want to be able to rock the boat at a program director's level, but at the same time I want to still be able to do a little bit of direct service.
>
> Well, I'm an idealist, like I said before. I would like to be a supervisor; I would like to see this whole child welfare system, you know, some fundamental change that would just . . . make it into the noble work that it really is.
>
> I know when you asked earlier what my future aspirations were . . . I very much would like to get into program development and policy and more advocacy for not only our families, but also pulling together the systems that work in our communities so that there's less reinventing of the wheel.

Interestingly, the opportunity to make more money did not surface as a major incentive for pursuing promotions. Indeed, participants perceive that advancing from case manager to supervisor does not increase one's salary by very much at all. Criticism of low supervisor pay arose mainly in discussions about whether or not to earn the MSW—seen by many as a prerequisite for advancement—and this topic will be taken up at length later in the report.

In any case, not all staff aspire to management. Some staff simply prefer working directly with families and want to keep on doing just that. One UWM IV-E program alumnus spoke feelingly about her preference for case management.

> I love child welfare; I love what I do; I love being a case manager. No desire to go to a supervisor position or anything higher than that, although I know I'll be poor forever or whatever, and that's okay. I know that when my family comes that's going to be my priority, and that is ultimately what will make my decision. But I'm okay with letting that make my decision.

More often, however, the reasons for remaining at the case manager level (or its equivalent) are framed in terms of *not* wanting to be a supervisor. Once again, perceptions of low supervisor salaries figure into participants' thinking: Some staff don't want the additional stress that goes even with being a supervisor, especially if it is not accompanied by a significantly higher salary. Supervisors themselves express frustration with what they see as inadequate compensation, given the increase in responsibility. State employees add that they, or their subordinates, don't want to lose union representation or the ability to earn overtime pay.

> [S]upervisors with the state are strictly salaried, where we do get some overtime when we're working late, and we have some protection with our union. . . . [M]y supervisor makes $1.70 more than I do an hour. . . . If I do some after-hours shifts . . . and my raises are negotiated, you know, so I'm

> going to get one when the contract is settled. Versus supervisors [who] get them sort of at a whim . . . There's no reason to try and be a supervisor with the state once you've been there for any length of time.

Thus, staff who do not aspire to the next job level—or are, at least, not interested in advancing within the Bureau—fall into two camps. One explicitly states a preference for direct service; the other remains in a subordinate position by default, because they simply don't want to take on a supervisory role.

Remaining at the Bureau—Or Not

As the comments about improving the child welfare system suggest, participants express considerable commitment to the field and to the children and families served. However, that commitment does not necessarily mean remaining with the Bureau or its partners.

> Five years from now I'd like to have my master's completed; I don't know if I'll still be working for the Bureau. I know I'll still be working with children and families cause that's . . . where I enjoy myself working. . . . [B]ut I mean it all depends . . . five years from now are we even going to have CFCP; is it going to be a new name, like who knows? . . . [F]ive years from now maybe I'll have my master's degree working for . . . one of the surrounding counties where I'll actually have a lot of stability in my job.

> I'm starting graduate school in June for my MSW and will be completing it in just over a year, and my aspirations are to work in more of a clinical setting and doing more assessment, more so than the case management that I'm doing right now.

> In terms of what I would want to do with [the MSW], probably just, you know, move up but not necessarily stay with the Bureau forever. Maybe move on, but become a supervisor, possibly with the Bureau for a while, but I'd like to stay in child welfare, so regardless of where I am.

> So I think I'm aiming more toward going to school part-time and still working full-time because I would like to gain experience in the workforce because I just graduated in December, so this is my first job experience. . . . I would like to work and then go part time. So in five years I would be looking to finish off my master's and probably move to another state, but I want to stay within child welfare.

There is tension between staff members' interest in child welfare and their willingness to remain with the Bureau and its partners, and several possible explanations for that finding emerged in focus group discussions. A couple of the supervisors pointed out that making

long-range career plans at the Bureau or its partner agencies is difficult for both them and their staffs, given the changes in contracting with partner agencies.

> But in terms of a five-year plan, I can say with a certainty that my four staff and myself are only going to be at the Bureau for the next three months, . . . because the contract is ending. . . . There is no five-year plan, as far as with the Bureau, for us.
>
> [Responding to the previous comment:] I think that's actually key in regards to what the environment does and what people are planning, because everything is so up in the air right now for the Bureau regarding their job. I understand that there will be jobs July first . . . it might be different agencies, different names and that, but there will be jobs, and I will have one. But I think for case managers to think as a system, as a whole, and then try to think internally for themselves, I don't think they're able to really do that sometimes, [to] plan. "Should I go back to school? Should I go to the IV-E program?" That type of thing. I think it's harder for the case managers to do that.

Another issue that surfaced is that a number of staff come from outside of Milwaukee and do not necessarily intend to stay there. Instead, they attend school and get child welfare experience in what is regarded as a difficult environment, and then return home, credentials in hand.

> A lot of case managers are, from my experience, are from like up north, Green Bay, a lot of different places. I've worked with a lot of workers that are actually from, like, farms . . .This is how I view it: I think working in Milwaukee is like the "hell hole;" if you can work, if you can do case management and work in child welfare in Milwaukee . . . then you can work anywhere. So if somebody can do that for two years, get they master's and go back to where they came from or somewhere else where it's not maybe as rough; they're looked at maybe in a big light, you know.
>
> I would say just about five out of my [current] staff are, but when I was an Ongoing supervisor, I would say about half of that staff, too, was like from another state. . . . [A]nd what they wanted to do was get their master's degree, because they wanted a . . . management position. But they wanted it back where, you know, their parents are, where they're moving back to, up North or whatever.

However, the most frequently-mentioned issue that bears on staff decisions to remain with—or leave—the Bureau may be the perception as to whether or not the Bureau values social workers. Because that concern also appears to affect participant responses to other questions driving the focus group study—educational aspirations, career aspirations, the adequacy of the IV-E program, the arrangements offered to employees

who wish to return to school, etc.—it deserves its own section and is discussed at length later in this report.

Summary

The MSW is understood by staff as the expected credential: Many already hold it, and among those who do not, most say they plan to earn it. Staff who have yet to obtain the degree—as well as those who don't aspire to it at all—feel the need to defend themselves a bit, further suggesting that getting the degree is, in some sense, understood by staff as expected, something they're "supposed" to do.

In terms of career aspirations, the commitment to children and families in general, and to the field of child welfare in particular, emerges quite strongly across most participants and expresses itself in how they talk about their career aspirations. For some, the satisfaction they derive from direct service leads them to limit how far up the ladder they want to go. For others, it translates to a desire to have a greater influence over how the field operates, which means moving into management. There is, however, a "negative" career theme, and that is a disinclination to move into management and take on its attendant stresses for what some perceive as inadequate compensation. Finally, staff are less committed to the Bureau and its partners than they are to the field of child welfare in general. Some arrive at the Bureau never intending to stay; others become discouraged by the work environment—an issue we will return to later.

Barriers to Graduate School

Statements about educational aspirations often are framed in the context of barriers; that is, those who do not yet have the MSW seem to be at pains to explain why not. This finding may perhaps not be surprising among child welfare personnel who lack such a critical credential; no doubt many of them have felt the pressure to return to school and are armed with reasons why they have not yet done so. However, even individuals who do hold the degree recall the difficulties they encountered in returning to graduate school, suggesting that the reasons given for not returning to graduate school cannot be dismissed.

For staff considering the MSW—and even those who have decided not to earn it appear to have at least considered it—figuring out how to finance graduate school is a major concern. The matter of money, whether the cost of school itself or how to support a family while a full-time student, surfaces repeatedly.

Finances

The most often-cited barrier to returning to school is difficulty affording its cost. The matter of finances surfaces in focus group discussions in three ways: the inadequacy of the Title IV-E program stipend, especially for staff with homes and families; the need to leave their jobs and forgo earning a salary; and simply having the cash to pay tuition. The first two issues are intertwined: Staff weigh the cost of giving up the benefits of work against the amount of money offered by the IV-E stipend. Because the next section of the paper will address the Title IV-E program specifically, the present discussion will focus on participants' comments about being able to work and earn a salary while attending school and on their thoughts about how to pay for tuition.

Inflexible work arrangements. Many participants complained about the all-or-nothing decision attendant upon returning to school, in essence, a decision to surrender employment assets such as salary, seniority, job security, and fringe benefits for as long as two years. Not surprisingly, few believe they can afford the luxury, and many wondered why more alternatives were not available to support staff efforts to further their education.

> You'd also think that the agencies would save money by allowing those of us who want to go back to school to, maybe, work 30 hours instead of 40, because [that way] they're not paying for training, which I know is expensive for brand new workers. They have people who are trained, people who are experienced, but just, you know, need to work 10 hours less a week so that they could go to school.

> [T]he Bureau itself doesn't really support it (going back to school). . . . [P]eople I've spoken to who have gone through the program where they were, the 70 percent program, their workload didn't change. Their abilities to do the job were conflicting with their school work a lot of times. And the administration wasn't always willing to be flexible in a lot of those things.

> I guess I would like to see more opportunities to stay on at the Bureau and continue pursuing full-time education or part-time education and having that be supported by the administration and by the Bureau through like lower-case loads or being able to work 32 hours rather than 40. I think that I would be pursuing it more aggressively and would be more interested in staying with the Bureau if there was more opportunities for flexibility and going to school and continue working there. So, I would like in the next fall to start a master's program and to be doing that, but I do question being able to stay at the Bureau and accomplish those goals.

> They really need to find ways to make the internships possible for us. . . . There needs to be some flexibility and some decisions made that make it possible for us to get that experience some way without having to give up on our mortgages and our, you know, car payments and everything like that, because there's just no way, under the current setup of the program and my employment, that I can do both. They're just not flexible in any way about that.

> [T]hey could approve . . . some kind of . . . educational leave of absence for a set amount, periods or months. You know, a lot of universities allow block placements for field placements. You could do them over 3 to 5 months and be able to come back, you know, after that and have your job position . . . still available.

Individual supervisors are viewed as supportive of staff efforts to earn the MSW. However, supervisors do not have the authority to change policies in order to really facilitate school attendance.

> My supervisor has been very verbally supportive. . . . I guess where I feel the apprehension is in the actual Bureau . . . in making kind of those possibilities where it would be like a lesser caseload or [being] able to work less than full-time in order to do that. My supervisor has been more than encouraging and supportive in pursuing those kinds of goals, but again, to me it's . . . more of an issue with the Bureau as a whole needing to make more flexibility than my supervisor being willing to do that.

> I think what you hear [from supervisors] is, "there's only so much I can do, I mean I don't have anything else to offer them, apply for IV-E. . . . [but] there's only two positions within five sites so, okay. You know, I'll encourage you to do it, but . . . there's no other options, so then how else to encourage?" [T]here's only so much you can do, I think, on a supervisor level. . . . I mean they can't say, "I'll lower your caseload, you know, and you can go to school part-time and that's great, we'll keep you here and everybody will be happy." They can't do that.

Someone who has chosen to continue full-time work while pursuing the MSW, spoke of the difficulties of trying to do so and of the help she receives from a supervisor willing to be flexible:

> I'm currently working full-time . . . and I'm also currently in the MSW program at UWM full-time as well. . . . I've been in the program for almost two years now, and I'm almost done but, it's very, very difficult to juggle both. Not all the classes are offered in the evening and Saturdays . . . and you really need to have a flexible supervisor that's willing to let you, you know, work a half a day here and make it up somewhere else, and you have to be able to have coverage for somebody to handle whatever happens while you're gone.

Supervisors themselves spoke of trying to work with employees to enable them to juggle work and school. One solution, implemented at the program level, is to let staff do home studies which are easier to schedule around. However, another supervisor noted the difficulty of supporting staff who are in school when the organization does not have a consistent policy to back up such decisions.

> I felt like kind of backed into a corner to support them, not by them but by my program because they weren't being consistent with their policies around flex time and being able to skip them on a case rotation or something like that. So I felt as though I had to have the same expectations of them as my other workers even though they were in a full-time master's program. They had internships, so I had to make some

> judgment calls around flexing their schedule, . . . knowing that other supervisors weren't being as consistent. We weren't getting any consistent messages from management around what the expectations were with the people that are in other education programs. [I wanted] to have a more consistent policy around that so people can know that if I would have left, they would have been able to transition easily into another supervisor. [I] also struggle with wanting the Bureau to support obtaining further education more, and I think that one way we kind of diminish the inference of that is by not trying to work with people around their schedules and caseloads and those kinds of things when they are wanting to go on for their master's.

Inflexible work arrangements are viewed very negatively by staff and are perceived to contribute to other problems within the Bureau and its partner agencies. Because supervisors or individual programs vary in their degree of cooperation on flexible scheduling, some criticized the Bureau or agency leadership for not implementing standard policies on flex time. Participants also noted that inflexible work arrangements not only make it difficult for them to further their educations, but also place burdens on other staff when experienced colleagues leave to enter graduate school. Others interpret the inflexibility as a lack of support and loyalty to staff that negatively affects their professional development and can increase turnover.

Paying tuition. Work arrangements aside, some staff simply cannot afford tuition, and they often view available assistance as being of limited help. Referring to the tuition assistance program for state employees, one participant stated that returning to school was "hard with the 70 percent program; you have to come up with the money first and then be reimbursed by the state." Another observed that having to come up with tuition in advance "impacts many people who, you know, maybe are single parents or etc. and don't have those resources." Staff working for partner agencies voiced similar concerns about being able to pay for school. Two specifically discussed the suspension of the $1,000 tuition reimbursement grants their agencies formerly offered to staff.

> I haven't gone for my master's, but as soon as I started this job I took two of the four classes for certification, and I took them right away in hopes that that would do something for me. And as soon as I signed up for the third class in the fall, that's when the finances were cut off within our agencies. So I wasn't able to pay . . . I can't come up with 900-some dollars, whatever it was, for this three-credit class. . . . And I don't have a way to borrow that money.

> [W]e had a $1,000 stipend which we don't have now. . . . So like my first [course] I paid for, and then the agency paid [me back]. And then I paid for the second one because there was hope that, our HR (Human Resources) said that they will pay for half of it. But I ended up paying for all of it, and then when the third [course] came out, they said, "well, no, we're not giving out any money now."

Another participant observed that the $1,000 grants finance only a single course, and that outside of the Title IV-E program, there really isn't a good financial assistance option.

> Or if you're not in Title IV-E, what are the other . . . scholarship opportunities, . . . it's, like, what can you offer me to go back to school part time? Like right now, we have a $1,000 tuition reimbursement, but that's like a grad class. . . . [C]an I still obtain some sort of financial assistance and commit to working with the Bureau, but without being in the official IV-E program? I mean, there's, it's IV-E or it's basically nothing.

It is important to note that many comments about barriers to returning to school appear to have been made in the context of UWM's Title IV-E program, even when that program was not specifically mentioned. Nearly all staff participating in the focus groups are aware of the program, and its requirements shape their thinking about obtaining the MSW. We turn now to a more specific consideration of staff perceptions about the IV-E program.

Benefits and Limits of the Title IV-E Program

A couple of participants who do not yet hold the MSW stated that they had applied for and been accepted for the program at UWM and were waiting to hear if they had gotten one of the IV-E slots. Others staff without the degree expressed the intention to apply for the UWM program and seek Title IV-E funding in the future. These staff members, whatever their reservations might be, are ready to accept the terms of the IV-E program. One participant characterized the program as follows:

> I think the IV-E is a sweet deal. . . . [I]f I could get the IV-E, I would be in the grad program tomorrow. Like it would be no question. I don't think that they could make that any better than it is. I mean, I'm sure there's always agreements that could be made, but you're getting tuition, you're getting a stipend. I mean it's a really, really great opportunity.

IV-E Slots Are Limited. This same individual went on, however, to note that the number of available slots for the IV-E program is limited and opined that, for example, two years of service with the Bureau should result in staff being "almost guaranteed a spot" in the program. This participant's criticism of the limited opportunities to enter the IV-E program was voiced by others:

> I feel like the issue is that not everyone is eligible for the IV-E program, and that's the other big barrier. If I'm going to go to school full time and still pay for it, and still live and work full time, how can you do that because there's not enough IV-E money for everyone who is going to be involved. . . . [M]y understanding is that you're not guaranteed to be in the IV-E program just because you're working in child welfare.

> [Facilitator, to a different participant: Do you know other people who've expressed an interest but because they know there's only two spots they just don't pursue it?] I know many others that didn't pursue it, and then instead they went and applied to UWM on their own, and they have to quit. They have to quit their job and go, and . . . I just finished paying off my Bachelor's, and you know I don't want to be consumed in debt again right away.

Another participant, who holds the BSW, linked concerns about the likelihood of getting one of the IV-E slots with being able to take the 15-month "fast-track" MSW program:

> I would qualify now [for the fast track] if I want back to grad school, but if I kept applying for Title IV-E and, year after year, never made it, I would add another semester onto my loans that someday I would have to take out if I was never accepted. . . . I know last year there were only two [slots] available for our two sites.

For staff like this one, the potential delay between completion of the BSW and entry into in the IV-E program may result in an additional barrier that adds to the financial burden of graduate school. Even if eventually accepted into the program, the lengthier commitment to full-time school, with its attendant costs, will pose just that much more of a burden.

Paying for It: Work and the Stipend. Concerns about finances surfaced repeatedly in discussions about returning to school. We have already seen participants' comments about wanting to continue in their jobs and earn a salary while attending school. In the context of the Title IV-E program, these concerns are expressed in terms of two issues: the need to quit working and the inadequacy of the stipend. In some cases, participants explicitly linked these two issues.

> I kind of have the incentive to get an MSW, although from what was said earlier, it's financially unobtainable for me. I wouldn't be able to take the stipend for UWM, and I wouldn't be able to quit my job and go to school. That's kind of where I'm at.

> Well, when I heard the comments about the Title IV-E program, it seems like a really great program when you're first out of college. . . . But if you, you know, I'm almost 30; I'm married; I've got a house. I can't go and live on that stipend. . . . I was interested in that program when I was worked at [name of agency]. I couldn't do it; there's no way I could get by on a thousand dollars that we were told was a stipend. I mean, I can't have my salary cut in half to go do my master's program; there's just no way.

Several recent alumni of the IV-E program stated that they supplemented the stipend by holding part-time jobs at places other than the Bureau while they attended school.[3] Two of these individuals added that had these jobs not paid relatively well, they would not have been able to make ends meet.

> I also had to get like a part-time job, and thank God for my part-time job! It was a job I held when I was in college. I was a manager for [a major drug store chain], so it paid very well, and they accepted me back at a manager's level. Had I gone back, like, at minimum wages, just like a regular job, no way would I have been able to make it. No way!

Having to quit one's Bureau job poses another problem for staff: the potential loss of seniority. Partner agencies exercise discretion over the employment status of staff who return to school. Some grant a leave of absence that leaves seniority intact. However, this practice is not universal.

> Another thing that I think is frustrating, too, at my site . . . we were [a former partner agency] in the past, and regarding the IV-E program, how it worked was you, it was a leave of absence, and then you came back. And now under [the new agency], it's a little bit different. [T]hey've told us, "you're not taking leave of absence; you're being terminated from the payroll." And you're expected to come back, and you lose all your seniority.

Post-MSW Work Obligation. The previous speaker links criticism of having to leave the job with the need to return to the same agency in a less advantageous position than when s/he left, following attainment of the MSW. Another participant also connects having to quit work and then return to the same place, but frames it a bit differently by suggesting that being forced to quit in order to attend school removes any inclination to return to the same job upon attainment of the degree.

> If I have to quit my Bureau job to go to school full time, they haven't really given me any motivation to come back or be loyal to their agency, because I had to quit to advance or go any further at their agency, to be a supervisor or anything.

Others also raised the necessity, under the rules of the IV-E program, of returning to their former employers and working one month for every month their schooling was paid for. A couple of participants disliked the idea of returning to their agencies, only to have the same job or to be making nearly the same salary.

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[3] Title IV-E program alumni who attended school before the state took over child welfare for Milwaukee county spoke glowingly about the generous arrangements they enjoyed: paid full-time school attendance during which time they continued to receive their full salaries and benefits. The comments of those who went through the program more recently revealed concerns that parallel those of staff currently attending the program and those contemplating an application.

> I mean, I guess if I had to go through, if I want back full time, I probably would apply for the Title IV-E program. And I don't know if that's something I'm really interested in, knowing that I have to commit to some place. Does it really excite me? Because, like I said, if I come back and have to do case management, that's less than I'm doing now.
>
> By the time [the IV-E program] became an option, we were told there was only one slot and that whoever took it would be getting that stipend and they'd be stuck at [name of agency] for two more years with no guarantee of a pay increase once they got their master's and came back.

The benefits and obligations that go with the Title IV-E program at UWM form the context for many participants' reasoning about returning to school for the MSW. References to the stipend, the need to stop working, and the post-graduation work obligation made their way into much of the discussion and exercise a clear influence on staff decision-making. Participants seem to have mixed feelings about the IV-E program. On the one hand, as far as financial support for full-time enrollment goes, it's the only game in town, and staff interested in the MSW look to it as their best opportunity and wish there were more available slots so that interested individuals could be assured of a place. On the other hand, complaints about the inadequacy of the stipend were numerous, and the work obligation irritates those who anticipate that that means just coming back to their old jobs. (The perceived pay-off to the MSW is further detailed later in this report.)

Part-Time Classes at UWM

In January 2005 UWM began offering classes from the first year of its MSW curriculum to Bureau employees in the evenings at Bureau sites. Students who complete the classes successfully may have this work count toward the MSW degree if they are subsequently admitted to degree study, but at present this is a temporary initiative. However, for the sake of clarity, since many respondents refer to it as such, this initiative will be referred to as the "part-time MSW program." Because only classes in the first year of the MSW curriculum were offered, and because students who have earned a BSW degree within the past five years can skip many of these foundation classes, the courses offered were not relevant to employees who had earned a BSW within that time.

In general, participants seemed to be aware of this program. Their opinions about it were mixed, regardless of whether they held the BSW and could benefit personally from taking the courses. A couple of comments, both from Ongoing case managers, praised the initiative:

> You know I do [think the part-time courses are a good idea], because I've actually taken the one that they offered . . . [but] there's still the question of what's being offered this summer; that's still to be announced. I don't know if it's changed since I looked at the last email, but I've already taken those, so that wouldn't be good for me personally, but I think that's a big

> improvement, and I'm happy to see that that's being offered and it's being offered at our sites. . . . I think that that's very good that they're starting that.
>
> I think for me, somebody who, I mean you can get a master's in a million things, and so social work is definitely something I see as interesting. But now it's giving me a chance to check out the type of classes and the type of program it is and say "wow, is this something I want to commit to for two years?" And it's giving me an opportunity to kind of like try it out and see if I'm ready to go back to school or to see if it's something, a program I can fit into, things like that.

Criticism of the utility of part-time coursework. Although the desire to be able to both work and attend school surfaced throughout the focus group sessions, some participants criticized the current part-time program as having limited utility either for them or for their colleagues. The criticism was not driven entirely by self-interest—even staff who do not hold the BSW and could, therefore, benefit from the part-time program, expressed concerns about the limited curriculum and other matters. One participant spoke of wanting to be sure of acceptance into an MSW program before taking the courses so that he/she could be sure "that those classes are going to count for something." Others pointed out that many of their colleagues would not be able to benefit from the limited course offerings.

> I don't have a BSW, so I'm eligible to take it, but there's this whole other group or a large group that do have their BSWs, but they can't even be eligible for these classes. . . . [It's] lucky for me, but what about the twenty-five other girls I started with who can't do it because they have their BSW. . . . there's nothing in between this, their BSW and their master's, for them to keep advancing and to keep going on with some sort of academic learning, and I think that's kind of crappy.
>
> So I mean I think it was useful for those of us who don't have our BSW to take them to get to the standing of, you know having a BSW. . . . I looked at it as a positive thing, a step in the right direction, you know, because of my situation. But I know that people with BSWs just kind of threw up their hands and were like, what good is this going to do?

Messages from employers about the part-time program. Several participants talked specifically about the information they were receiving from their employers about the part-time courses. A couple of people stated that their agencies suggested that the courses could be useful to staff who held the BSW, but had poor grades. One of these individuals resented the implication that signing up for the courses would signal a poor academic record. Other comments revealed that some staff had been given factually incorrect information about whether the part-time program might apply toward obtaining the MSW.

> I was told that part-time classes did not constitute (sic) toward getting your MSW. That's what I was told when I asked my supervisor. Because I said, how would we do our internships while working to get this part-time class situation? . . . She goes, "those are just classes you can take for your own benefit, they don't help you get an MSW." That's what I was told. . . . I was curious. One of my big problems has always been, how do we do the internship if we're trying to do this part-time? And she said, "well you don't; you don't get the degree through these classes."
>
> It's all the classes you have to take in order to get to the standing of . . . your BSW and continue on with your master's. So for anybody that had their BSW, those classes were useless. There's no reason for them to take them, and that was what was being communicated also. They didn't count for anything.
>
> [Speaking immediately after the previous speaker:] That's what I was told as well. That if you were looking at getting an MSW, but didn't have a BSW, take those classes and that will look good when you apply or it's what you need. But if you're just trying to get your MSW, that had nothing to do with the MSW is what we were told.

Finances: Paying for the courses. On the whole, participants felt that the sharing of tuition costs between themselves and their agencies was fair. However, a number of individuals stated that they had received information about how much of the tuition cost they personally would have to come up with only at the last minute, and the lack of notice was criticized:

> Regardless of the amount, it's like if you're trying to plan . . . for what you need, I mean it could have been two hundred, and that would've been great, but you needed to know. Not everybody has like thousands of dollars sitting in a savings account. . . . I didn't think five hundred was that bad, I just . . . kind of needed to know more than a day before this was all supposed to go down that I needed to have $500 ready.
>
> Maybe next year if they were offering just a little more advanced notice of this class starts, that was the other thing. Because, I mean then, $500, you're able to save that over a certain time. Like if I would've known four months ahead, I would have been able to pay for it

Summary: Finances are the Primary Barrier to Education

Focus group participants perceive the central barrier to earning the MSW to be that their only option for obtaining significant financial support, the Title IV-E program, requires them to leave their jobs entirely and live on a stipend that replaces only a portion (sometimes less than half) of their salary. For staff who already have assumed the usual adult financial responsibilities of a home and family, this is unattractive and, in some cases, impossible. Even staff who are willing or able to make the financial sacrifice may

be deterred because of the small number of IV-E program slots and the resultant uncertainty of securing one.

It is important to understand that financial barriers underlie nearly all of the other barriers discussed in this section: If staff do not obtain a Title IV-E slot—or if they cannot afford to live on the IV-E stipend—they must work. But full-time work, full-time school, and raising a family all at the same time may not be possible. Absent support from administration, individual supervisors may be limited in how much they can do to free up staff so they can attend class. But child welfare is not a 9-to-5 job, which complicates even the most diligent scheduling efforts if it means a lack of coverage. Attending school part-time might work, especially if the classes are held at the work place, but the current UWM part-time program is limited.

Focus group participants suggested various solutions to the dilemma, including increasing the stipend, increasing tuition reimbursement amounts, expanding the part-time program course offerings, and holding evening classes at the work sites. But the most consistently-voiced suggestion was to find a way for staff to continue working for the Bureau while attending school by implementing flexible scheduling policies that would apply to all employees and not rely on the cooperation of individual supervisors.

Absent such changes, staff who do not hold the MSW survey their current options for earning one and conclude that the costs will be considerable. We turn next to how they perceive the benefit side of the equation.

The Benefit/Cost Calculation: Does the MSW Pay Off?

The focus groups made it clear that although staff worry whether they can afford the cost of graduate school itself, most place their thinking squarely in a cost-benefit context: If I get the MSW, what will the career advantages be? Participants talked at length about their perceptions of what they could expect in terms of salaries and promotions when they return to work at the Bureau or its partner agencies with the MSW in hand, and comments expressing doubt about the rewards of having the degree dominated the discussion. A few participants stated flatly that, given what they see as a lack of reward, they have no intention of pursuing the degree.

> Well, I'll say that originally I wanted to get my master's degree, but in the position I'm in now, there's no incentive. I mean once I get my master's degree if I want to keep doing the job that I currently enjoy doing, why have my master's degree? They'll change my business card, but that's the extent of what will happen once I get my master's degree. So it's a lot of financial hardship to go through for most of the programs that we have available, and there's no end result if you still want to work in child welfare. There's no advantage to it at all.

> I put myself probably in the category at this point of not having any aspirations of getting my MSW. . . . I've been at the Bureau for about seven and a half years now, and there is no next job beyond supervision

> that we could move to. And, being there at this level, and being there for that amount of time, moving to supervision with what they offer supervisors for pay, I'd be getting essentially equal pay of a supervisor. What would be the reason to take on . . . probably twice as much responsibility for the same amount of pay? And, so there's no financial incentive to even make the attempt to put in the effort.
>
> I really have no desire to get my master's, and I think part of the reason is well, I've been here four years and I've been very discouraged by what I've seen. . . . I'm a single mom . . . and I can't afford to quit work and go to school. . . .I've also seen plenty of people get their master's and then not get the supervisor job and still remain as case managers, and they're not getting as much . . . pay as they thought they would, and so then they were looking outside of the Bureau. I love my job in the Bureau, . . . [but] there are so many times I have to put my [client] families in front of my own. . . . I would love to be able to do what I do or job-share with another person so I don't have to put [my child] in daycare all the time.

Even staff who have not finally decided against pursuing the degree echo the doubts about whether having the degree will pay off professionally.

> You do get a little bit of an increase . . . if you got your master's and you become a case manager. So if you went back to being a case manager, you would get a little bit of increase, but not much. Its not, it's like $1000, I think. So it's really not, I mean what's $1000?
>
> I guess [it's] kind of like what people have been saying, there is no incentive to come back if you got your master's. . . . [T]here's no guarantee that you're going to get a higher position, and like the salary increase is just not comparable if you were to go somewhere else.
>
> To be honest I'm struggling with [whether to go to graduate school] right now because I already have my Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, so I'll be in the fast track program, 15 months. I'll owe 15 months back, but then I'm going to have a master's degree in child welfare, and what am I going to do with that except remain in the Bureau where I don't want to be? Program Director is the highest I would ever want to be because I don't like all the political junk. . . . I don't see much of an advancement.

A supervisor who holds the MSW places the small financial reward accompanying promotion in the context of the additional responsibilities that go with the job. After noting that her salary was only about $3,000 a year more than what her subordinates earn, she continued:

> I went and got my master's degree because I wanted to progress; I wanted to see how far I can go up the ladder. Now that I'm here the motivation is,

> like, gone because I feel like the demands that they put on me are so extreme, and they'll never compensate me for what I do. And having a salaried position, I feel like that gives them permission to put even more demands on me because they don't have to pay me additional pay.

Another participant noted that just having the MSW is not enough to be promoted to supervisor in the state system because management experience also is required. This individual further observed that few line staff in her office were promoted from within, and that unlike case managers in Ongoing, who could become mentors (a step between being line staff and supervisor), her office had no similar option. Asked if promotion practices were a barrier to getting the MSW, even if the pay scale were to be changed, the response was emphatic:

> I think that's very much a barrier! The Bureau wants, at least the state employees, are expected to have some kind of management experience outside of the Bureau before taking a supervisory role. . . . [N]ot a lot of people want to leave the state employment and go to one of the private agencies for a couple of years and lose what seniority they were developing [to] try a whole new role just to get some management experience . . . and hope that there will be a supervisory spot back in the State when they actually develop some supervisory experience. I know of a couple of workers who have their master's degrees who have tried to become supervisors and been told, "you don't have enough management experience." So there's no way to develop that experience while you're still with the State because there's no intermediate step you can take.

Whether or not it provides them with the necessary management experience, case managers from Ongoing Services perceive, correctly or not, that the mentor position is the end of the line for them, unless they hold the MSW.

> Well, without [the MSW] I can't really advance at all in the Bureau, besides being a mentor. I can't be a supervisor. I can't make more money. Well, not a lot more. So, I think it'll help me possibly become a supervisor one day, [have the] opportunity to make more money to survive.
>
> And I completely agree with [the previous speaker] that you do need your master's to move on. I mean just Ongoing case managers, mentor is all that I've seen available for me with my Bachelor's in social work.

Although some comments about promotion after the MSW occasionally implied that participants wanted some sort of a guarantee, another participant explicitly took issue with this viewpoint and made a distinction between having the credentials and having the right qualities and skills to be a supervisor.

Summary: Cost/Benefit Calculations for Earning the MSW

It is important to observe that the foregoing comments about the potential benefits (or lack of them) to holding the MSW are, by and large, made in the context of "what happens if I remain at the Bureau." Focus group participants, particularly those in the mixed services group, expressed a good deal of unhappiness with what they perceive as a lack of opportunity and support for staff development at the Bureau. The previous section about the Title IV-E program suggested that such dissatisfaction colors the willingness of some staff to enroll because they don't want to return to their old jobs under the rules of the work obligation. When asked if they anticipated being at the Bureau in five years, a show of hands among the mixed group indicated that only four of the nine participants did.[4]

Alumni of the IV-E program, particularly those who graduated several years ago, just as the county system was giving way to the current arrangements, stated that they were "really in demand" by the private agencies, and that several of them advanced rapidly through the ranks. However, most of these individuals still hold their jobs, which limits advancement opportunities for newer graduates, particularly if they aspire to be program directors, because there are few of those slots. Concurring with another participant, who observed that the supervisor position is about as high as most MSW graduates can expect to rise, a IV-E alumnus added:

> There are only five [program directors]. There's only so far you can go up in advancement, and if truth be told, even someone coming out of the IV-E program, fresh with their little master's degree, doesn't really get paid very much because nobody gets paid very much.

Some of the focus group participants expressed their determination to obtain the MSW and framed graduate school as a personal goal, separate from whatever rewards the Bureau might confer. As was shown in the section on educational and career aspirations, some of these individuals also express a willingness—even a preference—for leaving the Bureau at some point. But even those who contemplate working elsewhere in the future realize that, if they enter the IV-E program, they will have to remain at the Bureau at least long enough to satisfy the program's work obligation. As they weigh the costs and benefits of returning to school, not a few perceive that the Bureau and its partners do not truly value the MSW, not only because it is not materially rewarded, but also because there is little support for employees while they return to school.

> No matter what, I'm going to get my master's. . . . I can either do that with the Bureau and stay with the Bureau, which is what I want to do, or not, because they're not willing to help me out or make any sort of like compromises with me to do so. I'm not guaranteed the IV-E program and not guaranteed a job when I get back from my master's. I'm not guaranteed a promotion. . . . I can go get my master's in any state in the country, I can apply for any type of job afterwards. If I want to stay in the Bureau, what is going to motivate me to do that? How am I going to be

[4] The focus group with Ongoing case managers was not asked for a show of hands, although they were asked to discuss their future career plans, and several responded. Of those responding, about half anticipated working somewhere other than the Bureau.

> rewarded to do that? How am I going to be thanked to do that? There's at this point nothing, other than the IV-E, which not everyone is eligible for, and I think that is a big deterrent for a lot of people who are involved because again, it's just like a lack of loyalty. . . . I'm going to end up leaving the Bureau if there isn't a program for me to be a part of or if there isn't any compromises to be done to get my master's degree.

This individual equates the lack of tangible support for earning the MSW with an attitudinal perception: The Bureau and partner agencies are not loyal to its employees and do not deserve loyalty in return. In their discussions, focus group participants sometimes moved beyond a consideration of practical matters such as finances and career paths to reflect on what some perceive as an institutional culture that is at odds with and does not value social work practice and professional development.

Non-monetary payoff: the utility of the knowledge

The monetary and career advancement benefits to having the MSW were not the only ways the value of the degree was discussed. Individuals who hold the degree—current supervisors and alumni of the UWM IV-E program—also discussed whether or not what they learned was valuable to their work with the Bureau and its partners. Focus group participants were divided on how well the knowledge and skills acquired in studying for the MSW transferred to their work at the Bureau and its partner agencies. Quite a number of comments addressed how well balanced the curriculum is with regard to therapeutic vs. case management skills or the overall emphasis on theoretical vs. practical information. Negative comments on this topic come mainly from supervisors currently working for the Bureau or its partner agencies.

> [W]hen we were talking about the master's, it was very theoretical. I mean I don't feel that I got things from that program that would enable me to work better with clients. I mean, I think I understood the system better—why kids come into [it], you know, the system and society and all that, but practical?

> I've seen people come out [of the MSW program] being very therapeutic, but not having the realism part of it. . . . I know you might get it in your internship, but your internship might not be what you're actually going to go into when you work.. . . And again, I hate to go back to where people come from or where race is, but race is a factor. . . . Most of the families we work with are, probably 95 percent African American and poor, crime, drugs and all of that. I grew up in that environment so obviously . . . I'm not going to be surprised at anything, roaches, rats, none of that. [But] I might have a worker come back to me and be like, "They had rats and roaches all over the place." . . . So I think they need somebody coming in to like really speak to the realism part a little bit I don't know whether that could be a course.

However, other participants disagree and argue that the knowledge gained in an MSW program is indeed transferable to work at the Bureau. There are two aspects to this perspective. One is that MSW training is not intended to be strictly practical, as this IV-E alumnus commented:

> You know, graduate school is not meant to be job training and so you know that, so you know that you might not be getting as much practice as you're getting theory and I knew from having done graduate school before that I would have hoped there would have been some more methods stuff and you have to balance that with the theory too.

Second, although acknowledging that it is important to "connect the dots between the reality and the theory," others maintain that theory can be applied to work with the Bureau because it leads to a broad understanding of the child welfare system.

> I thought the actual course work was excellent, and it did, for me, it changed my outlook, I guess just on social work in general, but also in the child welfare system. It gave me much more of a broader perspective, and I think that's what I've seen from the individuals in our agency that have gone through it as well. [I]t gives you more of that theory behind . . . your day-to-day work. I guess it enabled me to stay in the field, too, because I could take a broader perspective and didn't get caught up, and understand why things are the way they are and not get so frustrated.

Finally, several supervisors explicitly took issue with the idea that MSW-trained case workers were too therapeutically oriented and not sufficiently knowledgeable about casework.

> It's just that I've seen people with master's levels, and the way that they think and the way that they process the case is a heck of a lot better than the bachelors person. . . . I've just seen staff where they, you know, they've basically been doing it the same amount of time, and one with the masters and one with the bachelors, and the masters level person is just going to . . . come up with better care plans or whatever for their families, simple as that.

> One of the workers I supervise just finished her master's program there (at UWM), and . . . I think I can see the development in her critical thinking skills: how she approaches a case, how she develops planning around it, also just around being more globally focused with how she approaches things.

Connecting Theory and Practice: The Importance of Field Placements

By and large, the internship is viewed as a key element in MSW training because it offers the opportunity to apply what is learned in class to casework. Alumni of the UWM IV-E program in particular gave voice to this perspective.

> I definitely felt challenged and . . . really enjoyed working with the couple cases that I did have and do feel like that was useful for myself and the child. . . . I think the life book process, again, I really found beneficial in my learning. And I know that the child still has that life book actually, and so I think that that was very meaningful.

> I just . . .wish we could have had more families to work with. I know currently I am in charge of trying to get families over here to field for the current cohort, and I have a heck of a time trying to get the supervisors to give me cases. . . . And I find that sad because I know how important it is to the students, having been a student. . . . Sometimes it was kind of feast or famine. I really enjoyed the one-on-one with the children that the opportunity to get to really know the kids, to get to work with them, to do the life book work with them. I just thought that was a wonderful thing, to be able to practice the things we learned, to see how it worked out, to see the successes. I just thought field was the greatest time. We growled, we thought, why do I have to do six semesters of field? But I'm glad we did six semesters of field. I would have rather done another semester of field than maybe one of those classes. . . . I really think field was probably the best part of the program.

As the second comment suggests, if there are negative perceptions of the field placements, they relate to not having had enough cases to work on. In fact, all of the alumni who spoke positively about the value of the placement also bemoaned the scarcity of cases to work on. These experiences are viewed as very valuable, and if what is learned through that experience is difficult to apply in day-to-day casework, it is because of time constraints, not the applicability of the knowledge per se.

Summary: The Value of the MSW in Child Welfare Work

The focus group data do not allow us to account conclusively for the variation in viewpoints on the applicability of MSW training to work at the Bureau or its partner agencies. However, some other comments that arose in the groups suggest a few possible explanations. One possibility is related to expectations: The Bureau's involvement with the Title IV-E program, as well as its encouragement of the MSW generally, may lead some workers to expect a more practical, child welfare-oriented curriculum that gives them a toolkit for the job, rather than a general set of professional skills. It also may be that some staff are either better able to figure out where they can apply these general skills, or are simply more aware of subtle changes in their thinking that are in turn reflected in their work. Finally, some agencies or programs may have

found better mechanisms than have others for allowing staff to apply their skills, perhaps by rethinking job descriptions. How well the Bureau and its partners facilitate application of the skills acquired through graduate social work training, and how this training is valued by them, is taken up in the next section.

Social Work Practice and Work at the Bureau

Although the great majority of focus group participants are aware of the Bureau's stated interest in having a greater proportion of staff hold the MSW, a number of them questioned the goodness of the fit between the day-to-day work and the principles of good social work practice. Three related themes comprise the findings in this section. One concerns opportunities to apply the knowledge gained through graduate social work study. The second addresses what some participants understand as contradictory messages as to whether the Bureau and its partner agencies truly value a graduate-degree holding staff, and the third expresses what some individuals see as a conflict between social work ethics and how work at the Bureau is conducted. This section presents, perhaps, the most critical views of the Bureau and its partner agencies. It is important to bear in mind that these views have been expressed by a comparatively small number of individuals who currently work for—or formerly worked for—the Bureau. The selection process used for the focus groups (i.e., a volunteer-only or self-selected sample) does not allow inferences as to how widely these views are held by all staff.

Opportunities to Apply the MSW

The transferability of MSW training to child welfare work with the Bureau and its partners has two closely-related aspects. One aspect, which was discussed in the preceding section, pertains to the content of the curriculum and the types of skills it imparts. The second represents the other side of the coin; it pertains to how work arrangements within the Bureau and its partner agencies are set up to offer MSW graduates the opportunity to use the skills acquired in graduate school. Alumni of the IV-E program in particular observe that such opportunities often are lacking; because of the limited number of management slots, not every MSW-holding staff member will be able to move up the career ladder.

> Now when [another participant] said we were in hot demand, most of us still have those positions. The turnover has not been in the supervisory ranks, the turnover has been in the case manager ranks. So for the case managers who've gone through the IV-E program, and some of whom now have almost finished their two years, the positions aren't necessarily there for them to advance into supervision unless one of us quits.

Another IV-E alumnus seconded this idea, adding: "There's only so far you can go. . . . I mean you can only be like supervisor and how often do program directors leave?" Therefore, staff who return to the Bureau after completing the MSW may find that despite all their new skills, they're still doing their old jobs.

> I think you go to this school program, you learn this neat stuff, and then you get frustrated because you can't come back and implement it because you're still doing ongoing case management for twelve or thirteen families. And just the paperwork documentation requirements on that alone will keep you hopping. It's the same thing as a supervisor.

These comments parallel those of staff who do not hold the MSW and are calculating whether or not the investment in the degree will pay off in salary and promotions, but they imply an additional element: Staff with the MSW will be frustrated not only because of low pay—although that, too, is seen by alumni as an issue—but also because their jobs will not allow them to apply their newly-earned skills. One of the solutions advanced for supporting career and monetary rewards for attaining the MSW—namely, develop advanced practice staffing structures—is also seen by alumni as a possible solution for utilizing MSW skills below the supervisory level. The same speaker quoted just above continued:

> So, kind of nice if we could figure out a way to flesh out other job descriptions and different types of stuff within the Bureau, [but] the state kind of dictates what our agencies have to look like. . . .I mean the agency that I started with . . . had done some innovative, creative things around staffing, like having a case planning unit where the cases went for the first 60 days so that masters level experienced people were doing the family assessments and developing case plans, which were generally of more comprehensive and better quality because they were more experienced people. And that give them that opportunity kind of to develop that expertise. Well, when that became known to the Bureau Director, *cabash* (that was the end of it).

Another alumnus, who has advanced to an administrative position, expressed the belief that direct practice is, in fact, more relevant to the child welfare mission than is administration. This individual stated plainly that, for this reason, case management should provide the practitioner with a satisfying and remunerative career path.

> I mean it'd be nice if we could figure out a way that somebody would aspire to be an ongoing case manager for their whole career and being able to advance and earn money. Because being an ongoing case manager is incredibly more valuable. And as I sit in front of my computer at night, sometimes, trying to figure out spreadsheets and feeling like an accountant and wondering what the hell does this have to do with a safe kid?

Bureau Interest in Retaining Qualified Staff

Two contradictory ideas about the Bureau's interest in retaining well-qualified staff surfaced in the focus groups. To some extent, positions on this issue seem to vary with whether or not the individual holds the MSW. A participant in the IV-E alumni focus group stated that the Bureau and its partner agencies values staff who have the MSW, particularly degrees earned through the UWM Title IV-E program.

> But I think in general, in general, masters prepared people that are desired by the Bureau. . . . I think the Bureau knows when you've gone through the IV-E program. They specifically know what that masters program entails versus some of the other masters [degrees] people that are taking or presenting with that don't have a field placement attached to them, [such as] some of those other, like, weekend programs and stuff that people are doing. So I think they're very receptive to IV-E grads.

However, some staff who do not yet hold the degree stated their belief that the Bureau and its partner agencies don't really want staff to pursue the MSW.

> [T]hey have to have a certain percentage of professionals with MSWs, but then after so many, it's like they basically can't afford to have that many. So then it was kind of like discouraging. I mean [it was] like, . . . "don't everybody run now and get your MSW because we can't have that, everybody having their master's because we only need this percentage of it." . . . [W]ell, if I go get it, does that mean I'm going to lose my job? Or not get that site increase or I don't know? I thought that was a little discouraging, what was said.

> I think it doesn't take long working with the bureaucracy to change your mind about things. But I remember one of the reasons I left [private agency] to go to the state was because the state had more programs for getting your MSW. But then I got there, and I asked questions, and the supervisors didn't know. Or they . . . didn't want to go out on a limb and say, "well, yeah." They made it seem like it was very difficult to get accepted into the seventy-thirty program, you know, and it was just basically discouraged. And if you ask around with the other staff members it was like, "I remember one person that did that; it was like three or four years ago. Who was that?" You know, it's like it doesn't happen.

> I have worked in child welfare for about a little over 10 years and originally I wanted to get my MSW. . . . I really like child welfare, and I'm really committed to working with children and working with families, and my goal has always been to see the child welfare profession move up and be taken more seriously as a profession, on an equal basis with those that are doing clinical. And as of late I question whether or not that's something that I can do because I know the administration has come out and said, "You don't really need a master's degree to do this kind of work."

It should be noted that the comments suggesting that the Bureau and its partner agencies are not terribly interested in having staff earn the MSW came from the mixed-services group, and they form a contrast to those from the Ongoing services group, where

participants felt that their immediate supervisors, at least, *were* supportive of their return to school.

Social Work Ethics and Bureau Practice in Conflict

Finally, several participants suggested that the principles and ethics that form the basis of good social work practice were at odds with the Bureau's and its partner agencies' policies and procedures. Interestingly, these comments were made by staff without the MSW; masters degree-trained social workers did not voice similar concerns. Some comments also suggested that social workers were not held in esteem by management and that their efforts to insert practice principles into procedure have been rebuffed.

> It's not just that I've had policies given to me that were in direct contradiction to the MSW code of ethics. I mean I'm a certified social worker, if I get a complaint made against me doing that, I could lose my certification and therefore my job. But they make policies in contradiction to that code of ethics. . . . I got into a fairly significant argument with my supervisor when she started about some things she wanted me to do, that I said there's no way I do this as a certified social worker. It would be immoral and unethical for me to be doing some of those things. And it's because they don't know, and I think it's because, I don't think that a lot of social workers are hired as supervisors. I mean any social work experience at all. And a lot of that stems back to just general low status of the term social worker.
>
> I think there's a lack of respect for management toward the social workers and I think . . . administration chooses people that are just going to go along with what they're told. It's a total top-down management, and they're told to do things. . . . I work at [service division] and I thought a lot of things are unethical.
>
> Trying to make those, the ethics and the stuff we've learned from our training, to make them work with policy and procedure, they don't want to do that. They're not flexible in moving with the experience we get from any of the training. . . . I know that we have a couple on the staff with MSWs at my site, and they've said basically, "this would work better." [The response was], "[w]ell, that's just like not policy and procedure, so we'll take it under advisement." And then we never hear about it again.

There were one or two additional comments that linked ethics and practice issues with an overall lack of respect for social workers and social work practice. This perception was not widely voiced, but it may play a role in discouraging some staff from making the sacrifices necessary to obtain a degree they believe is neither esteemed nor rewarded. Regardless of whether or not these perceptions are accurate, they are held by at least a subset of staff and may complicate efforts to improve worker qualifications and retention.

As negative as some of the foregoing comments are, it is important to bear in mind that they were expressed by only some focus group participants, chiefly those who do not have the MSW and do not work in Ongoing services. It also is important to remember that at least some focus group participants may have volunteered because they have an axe to grind. However, it seems clear that there is a subset of staff whose views of the Bureau's interest in their professional development display considerable skepticism, even cynicism. If these sentiments are recognized as legitimate even by personnel who do not voice them, convincing staff to continue with their professional training will require a broad and concerted effort by the Bureau and its partners.

Part 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Prepared by
Steven L. McMurtry, Ph.D.
Susan J. Rose, Ph.D.

Helen Bader School of Social Welfare
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph,D.
Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

Susan Mayer, Ph,D.

Chapin Hall Center for Children
University of Chicago

Conclusions

Compensation

Results from the salary study reveal dramatic inequities in compensation both within the Bureau and between it and its counterparts in surrounding counties. The fact that many of them are underpaid is also well known to staff. Participants in the focus groups spoke out forcefully on this issue, and results from the web-based and papers surveys show that satisfaction with pay is well below normal ranges.

In light of these findings, it may seem surprising that differences in pay and satisfaction with pay were not found in the regression models to be significantly predictive of job satisfaction or intent to quit. Further analyses may shed light on this issue, but existing research suggests that pay disparities and dissatisfaction may exercise their effect on turnover in indirect ways. For example, dissatisfaction with pay is an element of dissatisfaction with the job in general, and this was found to be significantly predictive of intent to quit. Additionally, dissatisfaction with pay may diminish commitment to the organization, which also predicts turnover intention. It would thus be seriously incorrect to ignore problems with pay simply because they were not *directly* predictive of turnover.

Much has been written regarding the relationship between salary levels and worker turnover, both within the child welfare field and in a wide range of other industries. Generally speaking, there is agreement that small differences in compensation have relatively little impact on worker retention. That is, when salaries are not widely disparate, many other factors (e.g., job duties, organizational climate, supervisory relationships, opportunity for advancement) are much more predictive of worker turnover than compensation level. Experts agree, however, that when salary discrepancies become too large, compensation becomes a critical, even overriding, issue.

While no research exists currently to identify precisely how large a discrepancy is required for salary to become a primary contributor to worker turnover, available data suggest that 10 to 20-percent variations are sufficient. The current BMCW data clearly indicate that, particularly for Ongoing case managers and Safety Service workers, the tipping point has been reached.

Job Demands

In focus group sessions, many participants acknowledged the Bureau's efforts to keep staff caseloads within reasonable limits, but those in Ongoing especially noted that these efforts were sometimes thwarted by rapid turnover, which led to constant transfers of cases from staff who had left. Participants also noted the frequent need for extra hours and the time required to complete forms (especially those seen as redundant or unnecessary) and perform other accountability tasks as substantial contributors to job demands.

Results from the survey supported these concerns. Scores for worker-level staff in both Ongoing and other services were well above norms on the Workload subscale of the Working Environment Scale (WES-10), and score for those in Ongoing were more than a full standard deviation higher than average. The same was true of supervisors, and those in Ongoing were significantly higher than their counterparts in other services. Staff also tended to feel powerless to affect these demands, with workers and supervisors in all service areas scoring below norms on the Work Locus of Control (WLOC) scale. They also view matters as getting worse rather than better, with 80 percent of respondents in both groups agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "One concern I have about my job is that the demands seem to keep increasing."

Paperwork appears to be a major part of those demands. More than two-thirds of worker-level staff in both groups spent half or more of their time on paperwork and documentation tasks, and just under half of Ongoing supervisors also reported needing at least this amount of time for paperwork. Ongoing workers and supervisors were also significantly more likely than those in other services to need more than 40 hours per week to complete their work. The effect is that paperwork and other tasks soak up time that could be spent with clients, especially in Ongoing, where less than 15 percent of workers reported being able to spend even half their time in direct contact with clients.

Among those who remain on the job the typical method of dealing with these demands is to work more hours. Seven of ten workers reported needing more than 40 hours per week to complete their job tasks, and in Ongoing about one in four reported needing 50 hours or more. One way staff do *not* cope, however, is to engage in absenteeism, especially in Ongoing services. For example, more than half of Ongoing services workers reported having taken no unscheduled leave days within the past six months, and Ongoing supervisors also tended to rarely be absent from their work. Focus group responses suggest that absenteeism is suppressed, at least in Ongoing services, by a generally accepted attitude that all staff are dependent on each other, and failure to show up for work lets down others on one's team.

In focus groups, staff acknowledged that a certain level of paperwork is an irreducible part of their work, but many voiced opinions that much could be done to streamline operations. Staff felt that current practices often produce duplication of efforts, gaps in services, and lack of clarity regarding which tasks are the responsibility of which service areas. Perhaps as a result, there was strong agreement in the survey that their work "could be reorganized to make things easier and more efficient." Staff in Ongoing also felt that more needs to be done to educate court personnel about their job and it boundaries so that they are less often blamed for circumstances outside their control.

Staff Morale

The portrait of staff offered by both survey and focus-group results is one of individuals who are oriented toward child welfare as a career, believe that what they do

makes a difference, and like the fact that their work is challenging. However, though their overall psychological well-being remains within appropriate ranges, workers in Ongoing services in particular are burning out from the demands of their job. Two aspects of burnout—emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of clients—were measured in the survey, and Ongoing workers were significantly higher on these dimensions than other staff and also well above national norms for human service workers. Ongoing workers were also significantly more likely than others to report that their job was more difficult than they expected, that they feel they operate in a constant state of crisis, and that the demands of the job continue to increase.

Not surprisingly, these issues manifest themselves in job satisfaction. Survey results indicate that Ongoing staff and those in other services areas are not dissatisfied with the nature of their work or with their co-workers but with the circumstances of their employment. They feel they are given little control over their work, excluded from participation in decision making, and unrecognized within and outside the Bureau for their skill and hard work. They also function in a milieu in which they are expected to give up and leave or become calloused and uncaring.

Blame for these circumstance tends to fall on administrators, who are seen as either not knowing or not caring about staff concerns. They are also perceived as interested only in compliance issues rather than in service quality and effectiveness. Still, evidence suggests that the job and/or its organizational context play and important role in level of employee satisfaction. Staff in Adoption services, for example, tend have job satisfaction that is not only higher than in other services but also above the norm for the measure employed. Meanwhile, staff in the Phone Intake/CRT/FISS component have slightly lower overall job satisfaction than staff in Ongoing. Finally, though job satisfaction is significantly predictive of turnover intention, it is neither the sole nor the most powerful such predictor, so the decision to leave or remain with the Bureau or its partner agencies is complex and based on issues other than just satisfaction and other aspects of staff morale.

Characteristics of Staff

Research summarized in the literature review was mixed with regard to whether factors such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other personal descriptors affect job satisfaction or intent to quit, but results from this study found no effect for any of these factors. The results also add to existing knowledge by showing that personality characteristics such as hardiness, need for structure, and sense of general well-being have little or no direct effect on satisfaction or turnover likelihood. Some differences were noted between Ongoing and non-Ongoing staff with regard to how directive they tend to be with clients, but this variable was not predictive of job satisfaction and intent to quit. Accordingly, just as there is no demographic profile to be used in recruiting or selecting candidates, there also appears to be no personality profile that would be effective. Such profiling has become increasingly popular and widespread in private industry, where prospective employees often complete lengthy batteries of personality-assessment measures. Based on results from the variables tested in this study, however, such steps

appear unlikely to be useful in Bureau and partner agency hiring procedures, at least with respect job satisfaction or turnover.

Individual differences among staff that were associated with these two outcome measures tended to be characteristics such as the person's ability to find intrinsic reward in the nature of work in the Bureau and his/her level of commitment to the organization. These are factors that cannot be screened for at the hiring stage, but they could be assessed after some time on the job. The important contribution of perceived job rewardingness in predicting both intent to quit and job satisfaction is a noteworthy result. The findings here do not address *why* some employees find the job rewarding while others do not, but further investigation of this question and efforts to improve job rewardingness offer one potential path to improving retention and job satisfaction.

Another issue related to profiling or screening of job candidates concerns their preparation for child welfare work. The report by Flower, McDonald, and Sumski (2005) on turnover problems in the Bureau recommends testing prospective employees for competence in child welfare practice. This was also a recommendation of a 2003 U.S. General Accounting Office report on recruitment and retention of child welfare staff.. Our study did not attempt to measure job competence directly, but the survey of workers and supervisors did include questions about self-perceived knowledge and mastery of practice skills. These variables were found to have no significant effect on either job satisfaction or intent to quit. Results of the few previous studies that correlated competence with intent to quit (e.g., Jayaratne et al., 1991) also found no association between the two. What we conclude from our results and available research is that, with respect to job satisfaction and turnover, competence screening may have limited value for reducing turnover because what seems to matter in that regard is less what new staff bring with them to the organization than their experience in it.

Somewhat surprisingly, the same may be true for educational qualifications of staff. Some research has suggested that greater education is associated with improved job retention (Ben-Dror, 1994; Dickinson & Perry, 2002), but other studies have found that higher education may actually predict greater intent to quit (Todd & Deery-Schmitt, 1996). Still others have found that higher education has no association with turnover (Balfour & Neff, 19993) or that it predicts higher job satisfaction but not turnover (Abu-Bader, 2000). Our results showed no effect for education on either job satisfaction or intent to quit, and we believe there is little reason to expect that hiring decisions based solely on education will have much effect on turnover. This is not to say, however, that education or personal competence should be ignored--only that where these factors are most likely to have an influence is on *service quality*, not turnover, and it is important not to conflate the two. Administrators would appear justified in expecting that competency screening at the hiring stage could help identify staff who are more able to provide quality services, but they should be cautious in expecting that this will help identify those less likely to quit. The Bureau should certainly continue its efforts to recruit attractive job candidates, and a plan for doing so that was prepared by team members from CWLA is outlined in Appendix C.

Training

Many respondents to the survey felt they knew enough to do their jobs well, and many also viewed their jobs as the type that could only be learned by doing. However, a majority disagreed that new-worker training had adequately prepared them for their jobs, and many also felt they needed better in-service training (defined here as that given to continuing staff rather than new workers) than they had received. Focus group responses suggest that staff believe training content can be improved to ensure that knowledge and skills are not taught after they're needed. Refinements were also called for to improve the practicality of training, ensure it has the proper depth, and ensure it focuses on content that is relevant to staff needs. Examples of such content are court skills, managing paperwork, advanced interpersonal skills, and specialized training relevant to particular service areas such as adoption or Safety Services.

A further question is whether training can be revised in such a way as to assist with reducing turnover. While identifying areas of dissatisfaction with current training, results from the survey of staff showed no association between the perceived quality of training and risk of turnover. This mirrors previous research that has consistently found no correlation between training and intent to quit or actual turnover (Balfour & Neff, 1993; Koeske & Kirk, 1995; Todd & Deery-Schmitt, 1996). Again, an important caveat to keep in mind is the distinction between service quality and turnover. Better training almost certainly leads to better quality services, but efforts to reduce turnover that are focused solely on the area of training may prove ineffective.

Staff Development and Advancement Opportunities

Deficiencies in training may be linked to what many staff perceive as a lack of orientation toward staff development. Workers and supervisors view themselves as professionals but feel they have few opportunities or incentives to attend conferences, workshops or other professional-training activities. Both also note the absence of an "advancement track" within the Bureau and its partner agencies that provides either an explicit or implicit set of steps to be following toward promotion. Some focus group participants noted that the salary increment they would receive from moving into a supervisor position is too small to be attractive, and others report not being interested in supervision because of the level of stress involved in the work. Others noted that changes over time in the agencies selected as Bureau partners works against making career plans, since they may be set back by having to change employers abruptly.

Dissatisfaction with preparation of staff for promotion would probably be even greater if not for the fact most workers see few opportunities for promotion. In survey results, workers in both Ongoing and other services were below normative levels for the AJDI Promotion Opportunities subscale, and those in other services significantly more dissatisfied with their opportunities than those in Ongoing. Both groups strongly endorsed the idea of creating advanced practice positions that would provide an alternative for advancement other than supervision. This is consistent with remarks by some focus group participants who reported not being attracted by supervision and

preferring to continue honing their direct-practice skills. One option that was frequently advocated was to create additional mentoring positions. These were seen as doubly valuable because they provide advancement opportunities and also because many staff feel they receive as much or more training and professional development from mentors as from their supervisors.

Supervision

Comments in the focus group sessions indicated that workers typically have positive views toward their supervisors and the quality of the supervision they receive. However, results from the survey indicate that satisfaction with supervision is significantly higher among Ongoing workers than those in other services. The difference appears to be that, while workers in other services feel the quality of their supervision is about average, those in Ongoing consider theirs to be above average. In both the focus groups and surveys, the main complaint about supervision is that it lacks consistency, especially across supervisors. Also noted was the fact that so much time in supervision has to be devoted to compliance issues that too little is left for professional development.

Educational Opportunities

A large proportion (70%) of supervisors in Ongoing and half of supervisors in other services hold the MSW degree, and several others in both groups hold masters degrees in other fields. Among workers, however, only about one-fourth to one-third hold a masters degree, and most who do not are interested in earning it. Some results suggest that interest in the degree is higher among Ongoing workers than those in other services.

Students who apply and are offered spots in the Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) at UWM return to school full-time to complete their MSW, and during this time (which lasts from 15 to 24 months depending on qualifications) they receive full tuition, a book allowance, and a monthly stipend. To repay this they must work for the Bureau or one of its partner agencies following graduation for as many months as they were in the program. Results from the focus groups and survey indicate that, despite being attracted by this program, many workers choose not to apply for it. Reasons most commonly cited are that the stipend is not enough to allow them to quit their job or that they do not want to commit to the post-graduation work requirement. Another disincentive to participation that was noted especially vociferously among graduates of the program is the fact that many employers offer little in the way of salary increments for those who earn masters degrees, and participation may also lead to loss of seniority, retirement contributions, or other benefits.

Considerable enthusiasm was voiced in focus groups for an option that would allow staff to maintain their regular jobs while earning their MSW degree part time. This would avoid the drop in income necessitated by returning to school full time, and if staff were allowed to pay off their work obligation while completing their degree they would not face as lengthy an employment commitment upon graduation. At the time of the

focus groups and survey, UWM and the Bureau were collaborating to offer introductory-level MSW classes for staff in the evenings at Bureau sites. With about 10 percent of Ongoing respondents and six percent of those from other services reported taking the classes now or in the upcoming semester, participation was modest at best. Those not participating indicated that the largest barrier to doing so was the $500 share of tuition that had to be paid by the employee.

Job Satisfaction and Turnover

Survey results show that variation in job satisfaction and intent to quit can be predicted with considerable accuracy, and the most important predictive factors are ones having to do with the work environment. For example, higher levels of organizational commitment on the part of staff were strongly predictive of both increased satisfaction and decreased intent to quit. An obvious question that arises is what can be done to increase organizational commitment, and recent research offers some guidelines. In a study of 800 employees in a variety of organizations, Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) found that the strongest contributor to organizational commitment was a sense of psychological ownership toward the organization on the part of staff. Psychological ownership, in turn, tends to be highest in organizations that maximize participatory decision-making and employee involvement in strategic planning and goal-setting. In an even more closely related study, Knudsen, Johnson, & Roman (2003) examined organizational commitment in a sample of 345 substance abuse treatment counselors. They found that "increasing counselor autonomy, providing rewards for strong job performance, and establishing a work environment that supports creativity and innovation" were the most successful means of enhancing organizational commitment (p. 134). Remarks from Bureau staff in focus groups lend support to these assumptions. Several participants indicated that commitment is higher in agencies that are committed to their employees and demonstrate this in meaningful ways.

Besides organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion is another factor that strongly predicted both job satisfaction and turnover intention. As noted in the literature review, emotional exhaustion is one of three major components of burnout, and it is the one most associated negative outcomes for employees. First, numerous studies have found that role conflict and, especially, role overload are strongly associated with burnout. Simply stated, employees who are conscientious about their work and wish to do it effectively are those most susceptible to emotional exhaustion when workload demands exceed their ability to complete their tasks well. Role overload is a key factor in preventing emotional exhaustion. Again, the research literature is helpful in offering possible avenues toward reducing burnout. A study by Cranswick (1997) found that the level of caseload demands was the most important determinant of emotional exhaustion in a sample of rehabilitation workers. Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, and Burke (1996) also found that role overload and other types of role stress heighten emotional exhaustion, but even if workload does not diminish the level of emotional exhaustion can be reduced through a supportive supervisory relationship and though social support provided by family, friends, and co-workers. Their findings regarding the importance of supervisor support in reducing burnout replicated results from a study by Constable and Russell

(1986), who also found that emotional exhaustion was buffered by decreased work pressure and increased autonomy, role clarity, opportunity for innovation, and comfort of physical surroundings. These findings are also relevant to the results shown in Table 54 which indicate, first, that staff who selected "working conditions" as a reason they might decide to quit were more likely to be serious about that decision and, second, that the level of demands they face in the job is an important predictor of intent to quit.

As a final note, it is important to point out the turnover rate in any organization depends on how "turnover" is defined and calculated. Employees leave organizations for many reasons, some of which have to do with their work and some of which do not. Because of this, a necessary condition for any effort to reduce turnover is that it must be measured accurately and consistently over time. A suggested plan for carrying out turnover calculations that was developed by two of the research team members (Reitz and Alwon) is detailed in Appendix D.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Compensation

1. ***Reduce compensation disparities among staff within the Bureau and its partner agencies and between these staff and others in comparable positions in surrounding counties.***

Raise the base or starting salary for all workers to $31,825, which is the current base for Bureau state workers. If such an increase is impossible given current budget constraints, the base salary should be immediately raised to the highest level possible and the Bureau and its partner agencies should announce a commitment and corresponding plan for achieving an inflation-adjusted targeted figure of $31,825 in subsequent years.

This step would address two issues. First, it would bring the entry salary to within about $2,000 of the lowest of the surrounding counties, which reduces the discrepancy to about six percent. Staff are well aware of the difference between their salaries and that of others outside the county, and this has a corrosive effect on morale throughout the organization, especially in view of the likelihood that job demands are greater and cases more difficult in Milwaukee that in surrounding areas.

The second and even more important effect would be to eliminate discrepancies in starting salaries among staff. Ongoing workers are particularly attuned to current differences in pay for what they perceive is not just the same but more difficult work. This undermines organizational cohesiveness and fuels thoughts of quitting, as evidenced by the fact that Ongoing workers cited low pay as the top reason why they might resign. In their meta-analysis of existing research, Barak and colleagues (2001) found that "fairness-management practices" was a strong predictor in both intention to quit and actual turnover, with the most important issue being fairness in pay.

2. ***Ensure regular and meaningful salary increases for workers, particularly during their first few years of employment.***

This could be done through a step salary system that ensures consistent, predictable increases for staff on an annual basis. Such an approach would increase the financial reward for staying with the Bureau over time and provide incentives for workers who develop advanced skills, earn graduate degrees, or achieve higher state certification (all of which are indicators of organizational and career commitment that is highly correlated with retention). It would also address the current problem of inconsistency and unpredictability of salary increases. Specific recommendations for implementing a revised compensation program would need to be developed with the involvement of both state and partner-agency representatives. A starting point would be the report on worker turnover by Flower, McDonald, and Sumski (2005), which offers a detailed plan for a step system for worker-level staff.

Advancement and Staff Development

3. ***Develop a career ladder that provides opportunities for professional and salary enhancement for staff who stay with the system***.

Lack of promotional opportunities, lack of clarity about opportunities that do exist, and the strong endorsement of mentor positions and advanced-practice positions point to a need for making more options available to employees who want to stay but see nowhere to go if they do. An effective career ladder should be indexed to achievement, should encourage staff to develop specialized knowledge, and should reward them for being a resource for others. At present, both the organization and staff themselves are investing in higher education to create a more professional workforce, and a career ladder would enable better use of the skills they gain.

Such a system should include at least two worker levels (e.g., "entry" and "advanced" or "Case Manager 1, 2, and 3") and should also provide for meaningful movement across levels or pay grades for staff who attain state certification, master's degrees, or other professional accomplishments (e.g. specific skill sets in child mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc.). Specific qualifications for each level and methods for moving into them should be codified and made and easily accessible so that staff can plan a career path within the Bureau with some degree of certainty. Again, the stepped salary system proposed by Flower, McDonald, and Sumski (2005) addresses both compensation and advancement. The recommendations here are in accord with the general outlines of that plan, including its call for promoting the professionalism of staff by rewarding certification and the acquisition of relevant degrees.

Many staff who had worked as mentors or benefited from having a mentor lauded this model. Expanding mentor positions to parts of the Bureau that do not have them, and

increasing the number of mentor positions where they are present would be one of the most beneficial and readily achievable steps toward establishing a career ladder.

4. ***Provide additional support to new workers through increased mentoring.***

Experienced workers report fewer difficulties with the job than do new workers, suggesting that they have either self-selected for the work itself or have acquired skills for managing it. To the extent that the latter is true, a larger, more integrated system of new-worker support may help get more staff past the point where the difficulty with handling the job leads to turnover.

A key element of such a system should be more mentors. In addition to providing experienced staff with better career-ladder options, expansion of mentoring positions would benefit new workers, who often report that the assistance they get from mentors is as valuable as that provided by supervisors. The current ratio of Mentors to ongoing case managers is slightly under 1:20 (9 Mentors to 205 ongoing case managers). A ratio of 1:15 (14 Mentors) is probably adequate under normal circumstances. Given the current turnover rate and the resulting large number of relatively new staff, a ratio closer to 1:10 (20 Mentors) may be needed at present.

Another action to assist new workers would be to develop a systematic process for on-the-job skills development. The process should specify the priority skills to be mastered and suggest strategies (e.g., home visits with a co-worker, first treatment plan written with supervisor, first court appearance with mentor) for achieving them. A combination of supervisors, mentors, and experienced co-workers could be organized to implement this process. Results from focus groups indicated that further efforts are needed to clarify roles between supervisors and mentors to ensure they are able to collaborate effectively in assisting new workers.

5. Expand professional development opportunities for more experienced workers.

Focus group and survey results point toward a strong professional orientation on the part of staff, and there is evidence from both the literature and Bureau results that professionalism and career commitment mitigate problems such as emotional exhaustion. As one example, Balfour and Neff (1993) found that organizational commitment and commitment to the field of child welfare were predictive of retention of child welfare workers in times of high turnover.

To nurture professionalism among staff, the Bureau and its partner agencies should develop more advanced training programs for experienced workers and encourage greater participation in external conferences and other such opportunities. These could be coordinated with requirements for movement through the career ladder described above.

Over and above in-house training, expanded opportunities for educational advancement would be significant contributors to the professional development of

staff (though, as noted earlier, education may have only indirect effects on retention). The existing IV-E stipend program appeared to be viewed by staff as an important option in that regard, but many staff noted that the drop in pay and lengthy post-graduate work commitment were disincentives to apply. To address this, the Bureau should explore options for part-time advanced degree work, which allow staff to remain employed within the Bureau or its partner agencies while pursuing advanced degree training. Another element of such efforts would be to explore the possibility of allowing workers who wish to devote significant time and energy to advanced graduate study to move to part-time status or some form of a job-sharing arrangement.

6. ***Improve staff recognition procedures***.

Results from both the survey and focus groups indicated that negative consequences for poor performance are often swift, especially in the area of compliance, but systems for rewarding good performance are less prominent and efficient. To correct this, the Bureau and its partner agencies should take steps to develop an improved system of staff recognition and rewards. One step might be to appoint a Staff Development Task Force charged with designing the system, setting reward-performance criteria, and identifying meaningful rewards. This could be coordinated with the career-ladder and/or salary-step options noted above. Another task would be to work with various offices and partner agencies to develop their processes for staff recognition that fit their specific circumstances. At least some funding will need to be allocated to this process.

7. ***Refine and refocus training curricula.***

The Staff Development Task Force described above should be assigned the additional responsibility of comprehensively reviewing all aspects of current training. The group should focus its work on ensuring that the majority of preservice and initial worker training is directly tied to skills workers need to perform critical job functions and on identifying critical gaps in training (e.g., training for supervisors and safety service workers, training for court preparation and court appearances). One finding from the survey and focus groups that should be kept in mind is that concerns with current training were often less prominent among respondents in Ongoing services than among those in other service areas. Many of the latter voiced concerns that training is implicitly focused on new Ongoing staff, and too little emphasis is given to preparing staff working in other areas.

<u>Reducing Emotional Exhaustion and Increasing Organizational Commitment</u>

8. ***Refine workload formulas and review allocation of personnel***.

The impact of colleagues leaving their jobs and thereby producing additional work for those who remain featured prominently in results from staff, and it has also been noted in the literature (Barak et al, 2001). High turnover means fewer continuing

staff to divide cases among, and the burden of constantly receiving new cases from those who have left can expand turnover problems out of the ranks of new staff and into those of experienced workers. However, caseload size alone may not be the best method of achieving workload parity. Time spent in court and the other immutable demands of a caseload also play a role and should be factored into any workload calculation.

The Bureau and its partner agencies should develop a system for weighting cases that includes factors such as the number of children and intensity of case demands so that workload can be more consistently and evenly distributed. Efforts to streamline training of new workers and allow them to begin serving cases as soon as possible could also be helpful in ameliorating some effects of turnover, but careful steps must be taken to assign these cases gradually so that caseloads grow at a pace commensurate with growth in skills. Many staff noted that once new workers "learned the ropes," their caseloads often jumped precipitously because they were suddenly seen as qualified to help out with cases passed along from others who had quit. Finally, the Bureau and its partner agencies should reexamine the distribution of resources and workload across service areas. Given the high turnover in Ongoing and the number of measures in which its workers were significantly lower than those in other services areas , (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, etc.), reallocating some positions to Ongoing, at least until turnover rates have moderated, should be considered.

9. ***Streamline job tasks, especially paperwork and documentation***.

Administrators face a dilemma in implementing many of the recommendation outlined here in that their success will hinge on initial progress in reducing turnover and the attendant burdens it imposes. Yet reducing turnover may be a slow process that is tied to success in implementing other recommendation. One early step that may be helpful will be to look for efficiencies that may be gained in existing operations. A clear candidate is paperwork and documentation requirements. We recommend that the Bureau constitute a committee that includes substantial representation from worker ranks to review all such requirements with the goal of eliminating unnecessary tasks, finding efficiencies in both information and working arrangements in general, reducing duplication in forms and operations, and identifying the most efficient means of recording and transmitting case information. Portable technology (small audio recorders, personal data assistants, and laptop computers) should be considered for their potential utility. Along the same lines, the group should address the feasibility of enabling workers to do computer-based documentation and reports while away from the office, such as at home or while waiting at court.

10. ***Develop and reward constructive team culture***.

For Ongoing workers in particular, loyalty to the team and support from the team were consistently mentioned as helping to ease the difficulties of the jobs they faced

and contributed to their decision to stay on the job. Glisson and James (2002) found that a team constructive culture was the most important predictor of work attitudes, service quality, and turnover. They define the culture of an organization as the norms and shared behavioral expectations that prescribe how the work is done. Constructive cultures form the basis for socializing workers to these behavioral expectations.

Emphasis might be better placed on the team unit in rewards for meeting organizational goals. Team goals should be established with benchmarks for achievement by individuals and the team as a group. Workers reported that the present system is driven more by consequences for failure than rewards for success. This is indicative of what Glisson and James characterize as a passive-defensive culture.

The development of specialized teams where specific skills were formed can contribute to a constructive team culture. A team might be composed of a supervisor with specific skills and work habits, a mentor with experience and skill in managing the day to day stressors that can be communicated to less experienced workers, and a group of employees who can be socialized to these behavioral expectations. Teams should be encouraged to set some of their own goals and rewarded for achievement.

11. Mitigate "compliance-driven" work environments and foster organizational commitment.

All child welfare organization throughout the country must function within a complex network of state and federal laws and policies governing both budgets and services. In addition, the Bureau operates under the guidelines of a settlement agreement with the advocacy group Children's Rights that was signed in 2002. The agreement establishes a variety of performance targets, and progress toward these must be reported to the court on a regular basis.

Oversight of this type can be a powerful tool in ensuring that services meet basic standards and that these are maintained over time. A potential hazard, however, is that rote compliance may replace service effectiveness as the organization's goal, and result both services and the workplace can become brittle and impersonal. As noted in Part 2 above, focus group participants painted a portrait of the work environment "as overwhelmingly focused on compliance issues, almost to the exclusion of staff support and professional development, and punitive in response to perceived failures and shortcomings. Many staff described a high level of alienation from the Bureau and agency management, and more than a few openly expressed little hope that their feedback and suggestions would be listened to or acted upon in any significant way."

Given survey results showing the strong link between organizational commitment and reduced intent to quit, steps to reduce staff alienation and reconnect staff with the Bureau may be among the most important actions administrators can undertake. The implication is not that compliance must be abandoned but that by itself "compliance" is not a theme that will energize staff and draw them closer to their organization. In

addition, compliance-oriented management also tends to be highly structured, hierarchical, and less participatory than other styles.

As noted in the Conclusions section above, employees are committed to organizations in which they have a sense psychological ownership, and ownership is fostered by participation. Administrators need to seek ways to involve staff to the fullest extent possible in organizational planning, decision-making, and day-to-day operations. Team-building is also a pathway to involvement, and both theoretical and research literature suggest that many employees connect to their organization through their work team rather than as discrete individuals. The literature also offers many how-to guides for fostering organizational and team commitment, and these can be used to plan the step-by-step process of change. To begin this process, the Bureau should create a Staff Participation Task Force charged with developing a plan for reorienting compliance-driven aspects of management to more service-oriented and participatory models. The task force should be charged with developing an action plan that includes measurable goals and specific timelines for achieving them. It should also be responsible for monitoring progress towards these goals and reporting to both Bureau and its partner agencies administrators and groups external to the Bureau.

12. ***Encourage supportive supervision and assist supervisors with creating supportive team environments***.

Research such as that by Greenglass et al. (1996) suggests that emotional exhaustion can be reduced through a supportive supervisory relationship and through social support provided by family, friends, and co-workers. Supervisors are not just monitors of work but builders of teams, and they can model ways of managing role overload, offer support in times of work stress, and provide rewards for developing more productive ways of meeting the challenge of child welfare work. It should not be assume, however, that supervisors automatically know how to create this type of environment in their units, so training in doing so should be developed, incentives should be implemented, and administrators should also examine how best the organization as a whole can assist supervisors with this task

Implementation Process

13. Tailor standardization across partner agencies to specific needs and circumstances.

An arguable strength of the Bureau's design is its use of contracted vendor agencies to carry out specialized functions for which they are competitively selected. This allows particular vendors to develop and maximize particular strengths. Such models can provide a crucial advantage relative to services, but in the realm of pay, personnel policies, and similar considerations it can create a breeding ground for discontent on the part of staff who see themselves (rightly or wrongly) as less well treated or compensated than others in similar positions in different organizations. In implementing the recommendations here, therefore, administrators will need to be

mindful of the need to strike a balance between over- and under-standardization of policies. Areas where greater standardization across partner agencies appears needed are those of compensation, advancement (e.g., career-ladder development), and workload. Areas of less standardization are in order are training, documentation, compliance criteria, and other service-specific realms. It should also be noted that efforts to affect variables such as organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion, which are critical predictors of job satisfaction and intent to quit, will need to be specifically designed for each partner agency. As noted above, maximizing staff members' sense of "psychological ownership" in their organization appears key in efforts to increase organizational commitment, but it is doubtful that a one-size-fits-all plan for instilling psychological ownership can be devised for the Bureau as a whole.

14. Make achievable gains first.

This issue of how changes are implemented may be as important as what changes are made. The following are suggestions for the process of making changes.

- Identify a change that is meaningful and for which there is agreement regarding its need, then move forward with it as early in the process as possible to achieve an immediate and visible impact. Increasing compensation would clearly be the most salient, but if that is not possible improvements in other areas, such as hiring additional Mentors, could also be effective.

- Make clear the Bureau and its partner agencies strong commitment to address and remedy these issues--its "War on Turnover." Present an overview of the entire plan, including the initial areas targeted for intervention, the general plan of attack, and the initial timelines.

- Identify a small number of people charged with the task of moving the effort along and highlight the need for involving staff at all levels in the process.

- Remain focused in spite of other priorities and needs. Make decisions and keep moving ahead. The longer it takes to make changes, the less impact those changes will have.

- Communicate about progress constantly, both formally and informally. Develop a brief email update to keep everyone informed of activities and progress and make sure that designated "cheerleaders" are talking about the effort at all sites and offices on a regular basis.

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Appendix A – Survey

□□□ - □□□

A Survey of Workforce Retention in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

Welcome. We are Professors Steve McMurtry and Susan Rose of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Together with the Child Welfare League of America, we are helping the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and its partner agencies by conducting this survey of all public and private case managers and supervisors who provide direct services to families involved with the Bureau. The project is a priority of the Department of Health and Family Services, through its Division of Children and Family Services.

We value your participation in this project, but it is strictly voluntary and anonymous on your part. You will not be fired or suffer any employment-related consequences of any kind by choosing to complete or not complete this survey. However, your participation will greatly assist us in learning what we can do to help strengthen the Bureau's child welfare workforce. Our goal is to identify factors that affect employees' decisions to remain in their positions or to resign. It is hoped that the results will help the Bureau recognize and respond effectively to opportunities for increasing staff stability and preventing staff turnover.

This survey was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which governs all studies involving human subjects. The survey's design and procedures conform fully to academic and ethical criteria that protect your privacy. Your personal identity will remain unknown to us. Also, we cannot and will not share with the Bureau any information on how you as an individual respond to this survey. Also, only aggregate results (group data) in non-identified form will be reported from this survey. Data integrity and confidentiality will be further insured by keeping survey results in secure computers accessible only by Prof. McMurtry, Prof. Rose, and project data analysis staff (Dr. Michael Brondino & Ms. Megan Haak).

We estimate that it will take about 30 minutes to complete the survey. We recommend that you complete the survey in a private moment and away from public areas where others might observe your answers. You will be allowed time to complete the survey as part of your regular duties, and we ask that you do so by Friday, April 29th. You may receive one or more e-mails asking you to complete the survey if you have not already done so. Those reminders will be sent to all respondents, even those who have already completed the survey, so the Bureau will not know who has completed it and who has not.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please call Ms. Haak at 414-229-2311 or e-mail her at mhaak@uwm.edu.

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INSTRUCTIONS

This survey is confidential and anonymous. Do NOT put your name or any identifying information on your survey form.

When filling out this survey, please use a No. 2 pencil or a black ball point or gel ink pen to record your answers.

Please print in block letters, as in the following examples:

Example of CORRECT Response: What is the title of the most recent movie you watched? The Incredibles

Do not write in cursive letters. Do not write outside of boxed area:

Example of INCORRECT Response: What is the title of the most recent movie you watched? The Incredibles

Example of CORRECT Response: What is the title of the most recent movie you watched? THE INCREDIBLES

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
Not Like This--> ⊗ ✓

Example of CORRECT Response: Mickey Mouse is the most popular Disney character.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
○	○	●	○	○

If you make a mistake and want to change your answer, please fill in the correct bubble and circle your correct choice as in the following example:

Example of INCORRECT Response: Mickey Mouse is the most popular Disney character.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
⊗	○	○	●	○

Example of CORRECT Response: Mickey Mouse is the most popular Disney character.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
●	○	○	◉	○

Read all instructions for each section carefully

Please return your completed form in the self-addressed, prepaid envelope provided.

Thank you for your time and effort!

Section 1

☐☐☐ - ☐☐☐

PART A: Questions About Your Current Position

The following questions are to help us learn about the jobs, background, and experiences of supervisors, case managers, and direct service workers, and how they divide their time among various tasks.

1. What type of position do you occupy?

   O Supervisor

   O Direct services

2. In total, how long have you been doing social work or human services as a paid professional?

   ☐☐ ☐☐

   Years Months

3. How long have you been working specifically in the field of child welfare?

   ☐☐ ☐☐

   Years Months

4. In total, how long have you been working for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare or one of its partner agencies?

   ☐☐ ☐☐

   Years Months

4a. Have you ever terminated employment with the Bureau or one of its partner agencies and then later returned?

   O No

   O Yes

4b. Including your current job, how many different positions have you held with the Bureau or one of its partner agencies?

   O One

   O Two

   O Three or more

5. How long have you worked in your current position?

   ☐☐ ☐☐

   Years Months

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6. Are you a part-time employee of the Bureau or one of its partner agencies?
   - O No
   - O Yes

6a. If yes, what percentage of time do you work for the Bureau or one of its partner agencies?

   [ ][ ] % [Skip to question 8]

7. If you are a full-time employee, how many hours per week does it usually take to complete the work expected of you?
   - O No more than 40 hours
   - O 40-50 hours
   - O More than 50 hours

If you are a full-time employee, the following questions address the proportion or percentage of time you spend in each of the following activities: a) working with clients; b) doing paperwork or documentation; c) doing case-specific follow-up; and d) all other activities.

Please note that the term "clients" refers to the children, parents, foster parents, or others in your caseload whom you serve.

	Less than one-fourth	One-fourth to one-half	One-half to three-fourths	More than three-fourths
7a. On average, what proportion of your time is spent directly with clients?	O	O	O	O
7b. On average, what proportion of your time is spent on client services not involving direct client contacts? (This would include case staffings, supervision, meetings with provider agencies, etc., do not include paperwork or documentation, as it is covered in the next question).	O	O	O	O
7c. On average, what proportion of your time is spent on paperwork or documentation?	O	O	O	O
7d. About what proportion of your time do you spend in all other tasks that are not specifically identified above (e.g., waiting for hearings or appointments, reading and returning e-mails, attending meetings which are unrelated to cases, etc.)?	O	O	O	O

8. In the past six months, how many days have you missed work for reasons other than scheduled time off?

- O None
- O 1 day
- O 2-3 days
- O 4-5 days
- O 6-9 days
- O 10 or more days

9. In what program/location do you currently work?

- O Phone Intake
- O Initial Assessment
  - O Site 1 O Site 2 O Site 3 O Site 4 O Site 5
- O Safety Services
  - O Site 1 O Site 2 O Site 3 O Site 4 O Site 5
- O Ongoing Services
  - O Site 1 O Site 2 O Site 3 O Site 4 O Site 5
- O Adoption (CSSW)
- O Out-of-Home Care (LSS)
- O Other

Please specify:

PART B: Questions About Your Work with the Bureau

When the questions below refer to "the Bureau", please answer them as they relate to the BMCW as a whole. However, when items refer to "my employer" or "my organization," please answer them as they relate to the specific agency for which you work directly (i.e., the BMCW or one of its partner agencies).

Also, please note that the term "clients" refers to the children, parents, foster parents, or others in your caseload whom you serve.

B1. For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree. Fill in "NA" if the statement doesn't apply to you.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	NA
a. Child welfare interests me, and if advancement opportunities are good I'd like to have a career in it.	O	O	O	O	O	O
b. I feel more committed to my job now than when I started with the Bureau.	O	O	O	O	O	O
c. I feel my supervisor is very good at his or her job.	O	O	O	O	O	O
d. One problem with this job is that people don't stay long enough to learn it well.	O	O	O	O	O	O
e. The pre-service training I received gave me the information necessary to get started with my cases.	O	O	O	O	O	O
f. Child welfare employees in other counties have easier cases and/or better pay.	O	O	O	O	O	O
g. It is not clear to me what I need to do in order to receive a promotion and/or a raise from my organization.	O	O	O	O	O	O
h. I would be happier in my work if I could switch to a different job in the Bureau.	O	O	O	O	O	O
i. The court has so much control over my cases that I have little influence on what happens to them.	O	O	O	O	O	O
j. My employer offers better fringe benefits than others in the Bureau.	O	O	O	O	O	O

						-

B1. Continued

For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree. Fill in "NA" if the statement doesn't apply to you.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	NA
k. I get conflicting advice from different supervisors when I ask questions about my cases .	O	O	O	O	O	O
l. I feel the Bureau has given me adequate training for work with culturally or racially diverse clients.	O	O	O	O	O	O
m. I want to use my skills as a child welfare professional, but my agency just seems to want me to be a paper pusher.	O	O	O	O	O	O
n. I can't advance much farther in this organization unless I earn a higher degree.	O	O	O	O	O	O
o. I wish my organization would create advanced practice positions as promotion opportunities for staff with high levels of skill.	O	O	O	O	O	O
p. Jobs in the Bureau could be reorganized to make things easier and more efficient.	O	O	O	O	O	O
q. I feel resentful because the organization I work for doesn't pay as well as others in the Bureau.	O	O	O	O	O	O
r. When I go to court, judges and attorneys seem to respect my status as a professional.	O	O	O	O	O	O
s. I would like to stay in the field of human services, but not in child welfare.	O	O	O	O	O	O
t. Every time a case is transferred to a new case manager, that person changes the plan and things start all over again.	O	O	O	O	O	O
u. I would be interested in job sharing with someone else so I could work part-time instead of full-time.	O	O	O	O	O	O
v. To do this job well, we need better in-service training than the Bureau has been giving us.	O	O	O	O	O	O
w. No training could prepare someone for this job -- you can only learn it by doing it.	O	O	O	O	O	O

B1. Continued For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree. Fill in "NA" if the statement doesn't apply to you.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	NA
x. I feel committed to my agency, but not to the Bureau.	O	O	O	O	O	O
y. I am often painfully aware of the differences between me and the clients I serve.	O	O	O	O	O	O
z. Some of my cases require expert advice in areas such as domestic violence or mental health, but I don't have sufficient access to this expertise.	O	O	O	O	O	O
aa. The poor treatment I get when I go to court is one of the biggest frustrations of my job.	O	O	O	O	O	O
bb. I have benefited from having a mentor in my organization.	O	O	O	O	O	O
cc. The size of my caseload and its demands are about the same as that of everyone else in my position.	O	O	O	O	O	O

B2. The Child Welfare Training Program at UW-Milwaukee provides tuition and stipends to allow Bureau workers to become full-time students while completing the MSW degree. The following questions are related to this degree program.

a. Are you a graduate of this program, or are you currently applying?

O Yes O No

b. If NO, have you applied in the past?

O Yes O No

c. If NO, please indicate why you have not applied (check ALL that apply):

O I already have an MSW degree.

O I'm not interested in the MSW degree.

O I can't face returning to school at this stage of my life.

O I don't think I would get accepted.

O Even though I would get a stipend, I can't afford the drop in income.

O It takes too long to complete the program.

O I don't want to commit to work for the Bureau after I graduate.

O I haven't worked for the Bureau long enough to qualify.

O I have never heard of this program.

O Other Please Specify:

			-			

B3. Recently, UW-Milwaukee began offering MSW classes in the evening at two Bureau sites. The following questions are related to these course offerings.

a. Are you currently taking one of these classes or planning to do so in the summer?

O Yes O No

b. If NO, please indicate why you are not participating (fill in ALL that apply):

O I already have an MSW degree.

O I'm not interested in the MSW degree.

O I just don't want to go back to school at this stage in my life.

O Classes are not offered at days or times I can attend.

O Child care problems prevent me from attending.

O Though the classes are at Bureau sites, the location is still inconvenient.

O Trying to do this job and take graduate courses is too much right now.

O While the Bureau pays for most of each class, the cost is still more than I can afford.

O I have never heard of these classes.

O Other

Please specify:

SECTION 2

Part C: Questions About Your Working Life in General

The following questions apply to experiences in your working life and your views about your employment. Please try to answer all of the questions and avoid leaving any blank.

1. To what extent does your job give you a chance to see how good your abilities really are?
   - O Not at all
   - O To a small extent
   - O To some extent
   - O To a large extent
   - O To a very large extent

2. Does what you do in your job help you have more confidence in yourself?
   - O Not at all
   - O To a small extent
   - O To some extent
   - O To a large extent
   - O To a very large extent

3. To what extent do you feel nervous or tense in performing your job?
   - O Not at all
   - O To a small extent
   - O To some extent
   - O To a large extent
   - O To a very large extent

4. How often does it happen that you are worried about going to work?
   - O Very often
   - O Often
   - O Occasionally
   - O Rarely
   - O Never

5. To what extent do you feel that you get the support you need when you are faced with difficult cases at work?
   - O Very often
   - O Often
   - O Occasionally
   - O Rarely
   - O Never

			-			

6. To what extent do you find that you can use yourself, your knowledge, and your experience in your work here at the the Bureau?

- O Not at all
- O To a small extent
- O To some extent
- O To a large extent
- O To a very large extent

7. To what extent do you find your work complicated by conflicts in policies or interpretations of policies within the Bureau?

- O Not at all
- O To a small extent
- O To some extent
- O To a large extent
- O To a very large extent

8. To what extent do you find your work complicated by communication (or lack of clear communication) among workers, supervisors, or management of the Bureau or its partner agencies?

- O Not at all
- O To a small extent
- O To some extent
- O To a large extent
- O To a very large extent

9. To what extent do you find that it can be difficult to reconcile loyalty towards your agency work team with loyalty towards your own profession?

- O Not at all
- O To a small extent
- O To some extent
- O To a large extent
- O To a very large extent

10. What do you think about the number of tasks imposed upon you?

- O Far too few
- O Too few
- O Sufficient
- O Too many
- O Far too many

C11. How often does it happen that you have a feeling that you should have been at several places at the same time?

- O Very often
- O Often
- O Occasionally
- O Rarely
- O Never

C12. For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you disagree or agree.

As before, when the questions refer to "the Bureau", please answer them as they relate to the BMCW as a whole. When the questions refer to "my employer" or "my organization," please answer them as they relate to the agency that you work for directly, which could be the BMCW or one of its partner agencies. Finally, please note that the term "clients" refers to the children parents, foster parents, or others in your caseload whom you serve.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a. Administrators in the Bureau seem to understand the hard parts of my job and want to make them as easy as possible.	O	O	O	O	O
b. I get a feeling of success and and accomplishment from my work.	O	O	O	O	O
c. I sometimes have to be pretty bossy with my clients in order to help them make progress.	O	O	O	O	O
d. I am able to "turn off" my cases and not worry about them after work.	O	O	O	O	O
e. One thing I like about my job is the feeling I'm doing something that really matters.	O	O	O	O	O
f. It makes me uncomfortable that my clients see me as having authority over them.	O	O	O	O	O
g. I feel comfortable working with clients of different racial/ethnic backgrounds than mine.	O	O	O	O	O
h. There is an atmosphere in the Bureau that encourages staff to do their best work.	O	O	O	O	O
i. I am encouraged to think creatively in my work.	O	O	O	O	O

			-		

L2. continued For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you disagree or agree.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I feel I've lost my idealism and enthusiasm for my job.	O	O	O	O	O
I don't know as much as I should to do my job well.	O	O	O	O	O
No one notices if my cases go well, but I get in trouble fast if something goes wrong.	O	O	O	O	O
I often think that if my co-workers and I were not there to intervene, our clients' lives would just collapse into chaos.	O	O	O	O	O
My job is a lot more difficult than I expected.	O	O	O	O	O
The worst part of my job is dealing with cases passed down to me from someone else.	O	O	O	O	O
One concern I have about my job is that the demands seem to keep increasing.	O	O	O	O	O
This job is frustrating because I seldom get to see whether my work has had any postive effect.	O	O	O	O	O
It's important to me that I give my clients as much control of case decision-making as possible.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel confident that I could find a job as good as this elsewhere if I chose to quit.	O	O	O	O	O
Administrators in my organization are willing to listen to complaints or suggestions from staff.	O	O	O	O	O
No matter how much we plan things together, my clients seem to do whatever they please.	O	O	O	O	O
I don't feel safe in the neighborhood where my office is located.	O	O	O	O	O

C12. continued

For each statement below, fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how much you disagree or agree.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
w. Within the boundaries of law, I am given appropriate opportunity to use my professional judgment with my cases.	O	O	O	O	O
x. My job gives me opportunities for personal growth.	O	O	O	O	O
y. The difficulty of this job is made easier by feeling like I am part of a team.	O	O	O	O	O
z. One problem with this job is that it often puts me in situations where I fear for my personal safety.	O	O	O	O	O
aa. I like the fact that my job is challenging.	O	O	O	O	O
bb. I am concerned that if I were to resign, the person who took over my cases would not be able to handle them as well.	O	O	O	O	O
cc. It frustrates me when my clients won't listen to reason.	O	O	O	O	O
dd. I feel I can discuss things openly with my supervisor when we disagree about cases.	O	O	O	O	O
ee. I took this job because I need the pay, but I don't plan to stay in it any longer than necessary.	O	O	O	O	O
ff. It makes me feel good when I can give clients freedom to make their own decisions.	O	O	O	O	O
gg. I often feel self-conscious about being a different race or ethnicity than my clients.	O	O	O	O	O
hh. A difficult part of my job is the feeling that things are always in crisis.	O	O	O	O	O
ii. Nobody wants to listen if I have a concern or suggestion about how to improve things.	O	O	O	O	O
jj. I am often amazed at how my co-workers just let clients do whatever they want.	O	O	O	O	O
kk. It's only the loyalty I have to others in my unit that keeps me in this job.	O	O	O	O	O
ll. My organization sees to it that a good security service is in place at my office.	O	O	O	O	O

			-				

13. How would you rate your knowledge of the subject matter in your area of practice?

Poor						Excellent
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

14. How would you rate your mastery of the practice methods relevant to your job?

Poor						Excellent
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

15. Thinking about the clients you served last year, how successful would you say you were in your professional work?

Not at all Successful			Very Successful
O	O	O	O

16. How often do your professional values conflict with the work you do?

Never				Always
O	O	O	O	O

C17. Fill in the appropriate circle to indicate how you feel about continuing in your current job.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
a. I frequently think of quitting this job.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
b. I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
c. There is a good chance that I will leave this job in the next year or so.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

C18. If you were to leave your current job, for what reasons might you do so? (fill in ALL that apply)

- O Low salary/wages
- O Need for other benefits
- O Policies and procedures
- O Caseload level
- O Scheduling of work hours
- O Overload of amount of work
- O Working conditions
- O Lack of job security
- O Demands of this particular job
- O Inability to have a family life
- O Poor reputation of this occupation
- O Poor relations with coworkers
- O Children/parents this program serves
- O Time spent on court-related activities
- O Lack of support and feedback from my supervisor

Section 3

Part C. continued: Questions About Your Working Life in General

C19. As before, when the questions below refer to "my employer" or "my organization", please answer with regard to the agency that you work for directly; which could be the BMCW or one of its partner agencies. Please try to answer all of the questions, leaving none blank.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
a. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
b. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
c. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
d. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
e. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
f. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
g. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others that I was considering at the time I joined.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
h. I really care about the fate of this organization.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
i. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

220. Please try to answer all the following items about your job. If an item does not completely apply to your situation, try to select the closest or best answer from the alternatives given.	Not at All	To a Slight Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	To a Very Great Extent
* How often do your coworkers show signs of stress?	O	O	O	O	O
How often do you end up doing things that should be done differently?	O	O	O	O	O
I feel emotionally drained at work.	O	O	O	O	O
How often do you have to work irregular hours?	O	O	O	O	O
I feel I treat some of the clients at work as "impersonal" objects.	O	O	O	O	O
How often do you have to bend a rule in order to carry out an assignment?	O	O	O	O	O
I feel used up at the end of the workday.	O	O	O	O	O
I have become more calloused towards people since I took this job.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	O	O	O	O	O
How often does your job interfere with your family life?	O	O	O	O	O
I feel burned out from my work.	O	O	O	O	O
ı. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	O	O	O	O	O
. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	O	O	O	O	O
. How often do you feel unable to satisfy the conflicting demands of your supervisors?	O	O	O	O	O
. At times, I find myself not really caring about what happens to some of the clients.	O	O	O	O	O
. It's hard to feel close to the clients I serve.	O	O	O	O	O
No matter how much I do, there is always more to be done.	O	O	O	O	O

220. Continued. Please try to answer all the following items about your job. If an item does not completely apply to your situation, try to select the closest or best answer from the alternatives given.

	Not at All	To a Slight Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	To a Very Great Extent
s. Interests of the clients are often replaced by bureaucratic concerns (e.g., paperwork)	O	O	O	O	O
t. Rules and regulations often get in the way of getting things done.	O	O	O	O	O
u. I have to work a lot of overtime.	O	O	O	O	O
v. The amount of work I have to do interferes with how well the work gets done.	O	O	O	O	O
w. I have to do things on my job that are against my better judgment.	O	O	O	O	O
x. There are not enough people in my agency to get the work done.	O	O	O	O	O
y. Inconsistencies exist among the rules and regulations that I am required to follow.	O	O	O	O	O
z. Once I start an assignment, I am not given enough time to complete it.	O	O	O	O	O
aa. To what extent are you constantly under heavy pressure on your job?	O	O	O	O	O

* Source: See last page

			-		

C21.** Please fill in the appropriate circle beside each word or phrase to indicate your response.
"Y" for "Yes" if it describes your work,
"N" for "No" if it does NOT describe your work,
"?" if you cannot decide.

ıink of the work you do at present. How well do each of the following words or phrases describe your ork?

a. Work on present job:

Satisfying	O Yes	O No	O ?
Gives sense of accomplishment	O Yes	O No	O ?
Challenging	O Yes	O No	O ?
Dull	O Yes	O No	O ?
Uninteresting	O Yes	O No	O ?

hink of the pay you get now. How well do each of the following words or phrases describe your resent pay?

b. Present Pay:

Income adequate for normal expenses	O Yes	O No	O ?
Fair	O Yes	O No	O ?
Insecure	O Yes	O No	O ?
Well paid	O Yes	O No	O ?
Underpaid	O Yes	O No	O ?

hink of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words r phrases describe your opportunities for promotion?

c. Opportunities for Promotion:

Good opportunities for promotion	O Yes	O No	O ?
Promotion on ability	O Yes	O No	O ?
Dead-end job	O Yes	O No	O ?
Good chance for promotion	O Yes	O No	O ?
Unfair promotional policy	O Yes	O No	O ?

C21. continued. Please fill in the appropriate circle beside each word or phrase to indicate your response. "Y" for "Yes" if it describes your work, "N" for "No" if it does NOT describe your work, "?" if you cannot decide.

Think of your supervisor and the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well do each of the following words or phrases describe your supervisor?

d. Supervisor:

Praises good work	O Yes	O No	O ?
Tactful	O Yes	O No	O ?
Up-to-date	O Yes	O No	O ?
Annoying	O Yes	O No	O ?
Bad	O Yes	O No	O ?

Think of the majority of people that you work with now or the people that you meet in connection with your work. How well do each of the following words or phrases describe these people?

e. People At Work:

Boring	O Yes	O No	O ?
Helpful	O Yes	O No	O ?
Responsible	O Yes	O No	O ?
Intelligent	O Yes	O No	O ?
Lazy	O Yes	O No	O ?

Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? For each of the following words or phrases, please check the appropriate circle:

f. Job in General:

Good	O Yes	O No	O ?
Undesirable	O Yes	O No	O ?
Better than most	O Yes	O No	O ?
Disagreeable	O Yes	O No	O ?
Makes me content	O Yes	O No	O ?
Excellent	O Yes	O No	O ?
Enjoyable	O Yes	O No	O ?
Poor	O Yes	O No	O ?

** Source: See last page.

C22. For the items below, please indicate the extent to which members of your supervisory unit are encouraged to:	Not at All	To a Slight Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	To a Very Great Extent
Give support to others	O	O	O	O	O
Be genuine and open	O	O	O	O	O
Treat people as important	O	O	O	O	O
Grow as individuals	O	O	O	O	O
Show concern for the needs of others	O	O	O	O	O
Communicate ideas	O	O	O	O	O
Be skilled in human relations	O	O	O	O	O
Be thoughtful and considerate	O	O	O	O	O
Take time with people	O	O	O	O	O
Have up-to-date knowledge	O	O	O	O	O
Be a good listener	O	O	O	O	O
Show concern for people	O	O	O	O	O
Develop their own full potential	O	O	O	O	O
Be empathetic and warm	O	O	O	O	O
Resolve disagreements constructively	O	O	O	O	O
Openly show enthusiasm	O	O	O	O	O
Encourage others	O	O	O	O	O
Deal with others in a friendly, pleasant way	O	O	O	O	O
Strive for excellence	O	O	O	O	O
Be themselves	O	O	O	O	O

C22. continued.
For the items below, please indicate the extent to which members of your supervisory unit are encouraged to:

	Not at All	To a Slight Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	To a Very Great Extent
u. Take on challenging cases	O	O	O	O	O
v. Think in unique and independent ways	O	O	O	O	O
w. Interact positively with others	O	O	O	O	O
x. Help others to grow	O	O	O	O	O
y. Learn new tasks	O	O	O	O	O
z. Pursue a standard of excellence	O	O	O	O	O
aa. Work to achieve self-set goals	O	O	O	O	O
bb. Plan for success	O	O	O	O	O
cc. Enjoy their work	O	O	O	O	O
dd. Maintain their personal integrity	O	O	O	O	O
ee. Be concerned about their own personal development	O	O	O	O	O

Section 4

PART C. continued: Questions About Your Working Life in General

C23. The following questions apply to experiences in your working life, and your views about your employment. Please try to answer all of the questions, leaving none blank.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a. My job is what I make of it	O	O	O	O	O
b. On my job, I can pretty much accomplish whatever I set out to accomplish	O	O	O	O	O
c. If I know what I want out of a job, I can find a job that gives it to me	O	O	O	O	O
d. If I were unhappy about a decision made by my boss, I would do something about it	O	O	O	O	O
e. Getting the job I want is a matter of luck.	O	O	O	O	O
f. Getting a salary raise is primarily a matter of good fortune	O	O	O	O	O
g. I am capable of doing my job well if I make the effort	O	O	O	O	O
h. In order to get a really good job I would need to have family members or friends in high places	O	O	O	O	O
i. I believe that promotions are usually a matter of good fortune	O	O	O	O	O
j. When it comes to landing a really good job, who I know is more important than what I do	O	O	O	O	O
k. I would be given a promotion based on how I perform on the job	O	O	O	O	O
l. In order to get a salary raise I would have to know the right people	O	O	O	O	O
m. For me to be an outstanding employee on most jobs, it would take a lot of luck	O	O	O	O	O
n. Getting rewarded on my job would depend on how well I perform	O	O	O	O	O
o. When required I can have a good deal of influence on my supervisor	O	O	O	O	O
p. When I make plans on my job, I am almost certain to make them work.	O	O	O	O	O

C23. continued. The following questions apply to your experiences in your working life and your views about your employment. Please answer all of the questions, leaving none blank.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
q. Although I might have the necessary abilities, I will not be given leadership responsibilities without appealing to those in positions of power	O	O	O	O	O
r. It's not always wise for me to plan ahead on the job because things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune	O	O	O	O	O
s. When I get what I want on a job, it's usually because I worked hard for it	O	O	O	O	O
t. Whether or not I advance on the job depends on whether I'm lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time	O	O	O	O	O

PART D: Questions About You

Previous research suggests that personal characteristics of child welfare workers sometimes affect their job satisfaction and/or turnover rates. For this reason, we are asking the following questions about you. As noted earlier, your identity will remain unknown to us.

1. What is your gender?
   - O Male
   - O Female

2. What level of education have you completed?
   - O High School
   - O Some College
   - O Bachelors degree in social work
   - O Bachelors degree in other field
   - O Some graduate work
   - O Masters degree in social work
   - O Masters degree in other field
   - O Doctoral degree

3. What is your age? ☐☐ Years

☐☐☐ - ☐☐☐

4. What do you consider to be your primary racial/ethnic identity?

- O African American
- O Asian American
- O Hispanic/Latino
- O Native American
- O Caucasian
- O Other

5. What is your marital status?

- O Married or living with long-term partner
- O Never married or never lived with long-term partner
- O Divorced or permanently apart from long-term partner
- O Separated from spouse or long-term partner
- O Spouse or long-term partner is deceased

6. How many children under the age of 18 live in your household? ☐☐

7. What is your gross annual salary from your job with the Bureau?

- O Less than $30,000/year
- O $30,000 to $34,999
- O $35,000 to $39,999
- O $40,000 to $44,999
- O $45,000 to $49,999
- O $50,000 or more

8. What is your approximate gross annual household income?

- O Less than $30,000/year
- O $30,000 to $39,999
- O $40,000 to $49,999
- O $50,000 to $59,999
- O $60,000 to $74,999
- O $75,000 or more

PART E: Questions About You and Your Lifestyle

Who people are as individuals sometimes influences how they feel about their jobs. The following questions are designed to tell us a little more about you as a person. Again, your identity will not be known to anyone.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a. In most ways my life is close to ideal	O	O	O	O	O
i. I find that a consistent routine enables me to enjoy life more	O	O	O	O	O
b. The conditions of my life are excellent	O	O	O	O	O
h. I find that a well-ordered life with regular hours makes my life tedious	O	O	O	O	O
c. I am satisfied with my life	O	O	O	O	O
g. I like to have a place for everything and everything in its place	O	O	O	O	O
d. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life	O	O	O	O	O
e. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	O	O	O	O	O
f. I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life	O	O	O	O	O

E3. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question by filling in the circle to indicate how untrue or true each statement is regarding your current views and life situation.

	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Very True
a. By working hard, you can always achieve your goal	O	O	O	O
b. I don't like to make changes in my everyday schedule	O	O	O	O
c. I really look forward to my work	O	O	O	O
d. I am not equipped to handle the unexpected problems of life	O	O	O	O
e. Most of what happens in life is just meant to be	O	O	O	O

			-	

E3. continued.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question by filling in the circle to indicate how untrue or true each statement is regarding your current views and life situation.

	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Very True
f. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work	O	O	O	O
g. No matter how hard I try, my efforts usually accomplish little	O	O	O	O
h. I like a lot of variety in my work	O	O	O	O
i. Most of the time, people listen carefully to what I have to say	O	O	O	O
j. Thinking of yourself as a free person just leads to frustration	O	O	O	O
k. Trying your best at what you do usually pays off in the end	O	O	O	O
l. My mistakes are usually difficult to correct	O	O	O	O
m. I often wake up eager to take up life wherever it left off	O	O	O	O
n. Lots of times, I really don't know my own mind	O	O	O	O
o. Changes in routine provoke me to learn	O	O	O	O
p. Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me	O	O	O	O
q. It's hard to imagine anyone getting excited about working	O	O	O	O

Informed Consent Form — Paper-Based Survey

In addition to their usefulness to the Bureau, your responses to this survey may help us make recommendations for improving the conditions of staff in other child welfare agencies in Wisconsin or elsewhere. We cannot guarantee a personal benefit to you for participating, but, we would like your permission to report results from this survey in professional publications to those audiences. Although we are conducting this survey for the Bureau, we also want to report the results as research to other scholars interested in this subject. The purpose of this consent form is to ask if you want your responses included in this research.

As noted on the first page, your identity is not known to us, and all respondents will remain completely anonymous in project reports, which will include only data reported as group responses. We will not share data on any responses that can be identified with you as an individual. Because there is a possibility that there could be some impact on employment if data are not kept confidential, we will exercise extreme care in keeping data confidential by taking the following steps. Only UWM project staff will have access to the data. Bureau staff or personnel from the state Department of Children and Family Services will NOT have access.

If you are willing to allow us to use your anonymous responses, simply click the "Submit" button at the bottom of this page. Once you hit the "Submit" button, your responses cannot be changed. In allowing us to include your information, you are acknowledging that you will not be paid for participating.

Your agreement to include your anonymous responses is voluntary and there is no penalty of any kind to you if you do not wish to have your data included. If you prefer we NOT include the information you have provided, please fill in the circle below.

I do NOT want the answers I provided to be used. ○

If you have additional questions, feel free to contact the co-principal investigator, Prof. Steve McMurtry, at: Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 786, Milwaukee, WI 53201. Dr. McMurtry's telephone number is 414-229-2249. His e-mail address is mcmurtry@uwm.edu.

If you have any complaints about your treatment in this study, you may call or write:

Chris Buth Furness
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
PO Box 340
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229-3173

Although Chris Buth Furness will ask your name, all complaints are kept in confidence.

THANK YOU!

If you have any comments, feel free to write them on the following page.

Please send completed form back to UWM in the self-addressed, prepaid envelope provided.

Appendix B – Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Interview Guide: Groups of staff who do not have the MSW (Conducted April 5, 2005 and April 7, 2005)

Educational and career aspirations

1. What aspirations do you hold, if any, for obtaining a graduate degree?
    - Which degree are you interested in getting?

2. What are your career aspirations?
    - (Alternative wording: In what type of job do you hope to see yourself in five years?)
    - How does getting the type of graduate degree you want fit with your career aspirations?

3. What messages do you get from your employer about furthering your education? (Probe as indicated:)
    - How are these messages conveyed (i.e., informal conversations with supervisor, as part of a formal employee review process, etc.)
    - What type additional education does your employer encourage you to get?

Aspirations toward obtaining the MSW degree

4. If you have an interest in earning the MSW, what plans, if any, have you made for enrolling in an MSW program?
    - (Probe as needed: actually applied to a school, made plans to enroll, explored MSW programs, steps taken to have the money, etc.)

5. How do you plan to use the degree; that is, what do you hope you will be able to do professionally by having an MSW?
    - (Probe as necessary to tease out 1) individuals who are interested in moving into administrative roles and 2) those who are interested in direct service roles, but want a career ladder.)
    - What direct benefits do you see for yourself if you earn the MSW?
        - (Possibly probe to determine if benefits are seen mainly in connection with work at the Bureau or for work elsewhere.)

6. (If this emerges, explore: Respondents began, but did not continue, MSW work
    - What were the reasons that led you to discontinue work on the MSW? (Probe: Do these reasons still exist?)
    - Do you plan to return to school, and if so, how soon?
    - If no plans to return: What, if anything, would make you seriously consider resuming work on the degree?

MSW programs at UWM

7. What are your perceptions the MSW program at UWM? (Probe to get beyond summary characterizations like positive experience, negative experience, etc. and ask participants to describe specifically their experiences or others' experiences as told to them.)
    - What has your employer/supervisor said, if anything, about the program?
    - If you have colleagues or friends who attended the program, what have they said about their experiences with it?
    - If you have previously applied to the program or taken a few courses there, how would you describe your experiences?

8. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in UWM's MSW program?
    - What do you think you would like best about the program? Or: What is it about the UWM program that most interests you?
    - What do you think you would like least about the program? Or: What in particular is it about the UWM program that makes you uninterested in applying?
    - What would be the main obstacles to enrolling for you? (Probe: Time, finances, academic reasons, etc.)

9. As you may know, UWM, in partnership with the Bureau, offers a full-time MSW program to Bureau employees that provides tuition assistance and a living stipend; students are given time-off from their Bureau duties to attend school full-time. In return, program graduates commit to working for the Bureau for a specified period of time.
    - What are your perceptions/what do you know about the Title IV-E MSW program? (Allow for statements regarding personal knowledge, knowledge via colleagues and friends, from employers, etc.)

10. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in the Title IV-E MSW program?
    - Which features of the program are most likely to induce you to apply and attend?
    - Which features would make you less likely to apply and attend?
    - What could the IV-E program do, in addition to what it currently offers, that would increase the likelihood that you would enroll?
    - If you are interested in the program, when do you think you would be likely to try to enroll? (Probe to determine if participants have immediate plans, if they have a specific time period in mind, or if their plans are vague—"sometime")

11. As you may know, UWM has recently begun offering a part-time MSW degree program. Classes are held during the evening and on Saturdays, so that students can continue to work. The Bureau provides partial assistance with tuition, but there is no living stipend, and graduates are not obligated to work for the Bureau upon completion of the degree.

- What are your perceptions/what do you know about the part-time MSW program? (Allow for statements regarding personal knowledge, knowledge via colleagues and friends, from employers, etc.)

12. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in the part-time MSW program?
    - Which features of the program are most likely to induce you to apply and attend?
    - Which features would make you less likely to apply and attend?
    - What could the part-time program do, in addition to what it currently offers, that would increase the likelihood that you would enroll?
    - If you are interested in the program, when do you think you would be likely to try to enroll? (Probe to determine if participants have immediate plans, if they have a specific time period in mind, or if their plans are vague—"sometime")

Encouraging attainment of the MSW

13. What, if anything, could the agency you work for do to make it more likely that you would enroll in the UWM program?
    - Probe for specifics: time off or flexible scheduling for part-time enrollment, clear salary/promotion schedules contingent on the MSW, etc.

Focus Group Interview Guide: Supervisors
(Conducted April 12, 2005)

Educational and career aspirations

2. Do you personally have aspirations for obtaining a graduate degree or another in addition to any you currently hold?
    - Which degree(s) are you interested in getting?

3. Thinking now of the workers you supervise, what do you know of their aspirations for obtaining a graduate degree or another in addition to any they currently hold?
    a. Which degree(s) are they interested in getting?

3. What are your career aspirations? For example, if things go as you hope, what job or position would you like to be in five years from now
    a. How does getting the type of graduate degree you want fit with your career aspirations?

4. Thinking now of the workers you supervise, what do you know of their career aspirations? What sort of jobs or positions do you think they would like to be in five years from now?
    a. Would getting a graduate degree would be important for them to achieve their five-year aims?

5. What messages do you get from your employer about furthering your own education? (Probe as indicated:)
    - How are these messages conveyed (i.e., informal conversations with supervisor, as part of a formal employee review process, etc.)
    - What type additional education does your employer encourage you to get?
    - Do you think the messages your workers about education are similar?

Aspirations toward obtaining the MSW degree

4. If you have an interest in earning the MSW, what plans, if any, have you made for enrolling in an MSW program?
    - (Probe as needed: actually applied to a school, made plans to enroll, explored MSW programs, steps taken to have the money, etc.)

5. How do you plan to use the degree; that is, what do you hope you will be able to do professionally by having an MSW?
    - (Probe as necessary to tease out 1) individuals who are interested in moving into administrative roles and 2) those who are interested in direct service roles, but want a career ladder.)
    - What direct benefits do you see for yourself if you earn the MSW?

- (Possibly probe to determine if benefits are seen mainly in connection with work at the Bureau or for work elsewhere.)

6. (If this emerges, explore: Respondents began, but did not continue, MSW work
    - What were the reasons that led you to discontinue work on the MSW? (Probe: Do these reasons still exist?)
    - Do you plan to return to school, and if so, how soon?
    - If no plans to return: What, if anything, would make you seriously consider resuming work on the degree?

MSW programs at UWM

7. What are your perceptions the MSW program at UWM? (Probe to get beyond summary characterizations like positive experience, negative experience, etc. and ask participants to describe specifically their experiences or others' experiences as told to them.)
    - What has your employer/supervisor said, if anything, about the program?
    - If you have colleagues or friends who attended the program, what have they said about their experiences with it?
    - If you have previously applied to the program or taken a few courses there, how would you describe your experiences?

8. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in UWM's MSW program?
    - What do you think you would like best about the program? Or: What is it about the UWM program that most interests you?
    - What do you think you would like least about the program? Or: What in particular is it about the UWM program that makes you uninterested in applying?
    - What would be the main obstacles to enrolling for you? (Probe: Time, finances, academic reasons, etc.)

9. As you may know, UWM, in partnership with the Bureau, offers a full-time MSW program to Bureau employees that provides tuition assistance and a living stipend; students are given time-off from their Bureau duties to attend school full-time. In return, program graduates commit to working for the Bureau for a specified period of time.
    - What are your perceptions/what do you know about the Title IV-E MSW program? (Allow for statements regarding personal knowledge, knowledge via colleagues and friends, from employers, etc.)

10. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in the Title IV-E MSW program?
    - Which features of the program are most likely to induce you to apply and attend?
    - Which features would make you less likely to apply and attend?
    - What could the IV-E program do, in addition to what it currently offers, that would increase the likelihood that you would enroll?

- If you are interested in the program, when do you think you would be likely to try to enroll? (Probe to determine if participants have immediate plans, if they have a specific time period in mind, or if their plans are vague—"sometime")

11. As you may know, UWM has recently begun offering a part-time MSW degree program. Classes are held during the evening and on Saturdays, so that students can continue to work. The Bureau provides partial assistance with tuition, but there is no living stipend, and graduates are not obligated to work for the Bureau upon completion of the degree.
    - What are your perceptions/what do you know about the part-time MSW program? (Allow for statements regarding personal knowledge, knowledge via colleagues and friends, from employers, etc.)

12. How would you describe your interest in enrolling in the part-time MSW program?
    - Which features of the program are most likely to induce you to apply and attend?
    - Which features would make you less likely to apply and attend?
    - What could the part-time program do, in addition to what it currently offers, that would increase the likelihood that you would enroll?
    - If you are interested in the program, when do you think you would be likely to try to enroll? (Probe to determine if participants have immediate plans, if they have a specific time period in mind, or if their plans are vague—"sometime")

Encouraging attainment of the MSW

13. What, if anything, could the agency you work for do to make it more likely that you would enroll in the UWM program?
    - Probe for specifics: time off or flexible scheduling for part-time enrollment, clear salary/promotion schedules contingent on the MSW, etc.

Focus Group Interview Guide:
UWM Title IV MSW program alumni
(Conducted May 5, 2005)

Openers – possibly characterize the group re: current work, how long stayed with Bureau after completing obligatory service (if no longer there), etc.

Impact on work with Bureau of obtaining the MSW:

- What effect, if any, did obtaining the MSW had on your ability to do your job with the Bureau? (Probe for each in turn, as needed:)
    - on your effectiveness on the job
    - on your career paths
    - on the satisfaction you take in your work, effectiveness on the job
    - (any other effects?)

- What aspects of doing your work at the Bureau were not very much affected by your MSW training? That is, what skills/knowledge that you often use was not included in the MSW training? (Alternatively: What regular tasks require skills/knowledge that were not included in the MSW training? What proportion of what you do each day/week do these tasks represent?)

- Looking back, if you had it to make the decision to enroll in the program over again, what would you do?
    - What elements of the program would be most important in helping you make that decision (whether to do it again or not)?

- In terms of working at the Bureau, what was/has been the most valuable aspect of taking the MSW? The least?

Appraisal of program and recommendations

- What did you like most about the UWM program?
- What did you like least about it?
  (Probe for specifics; connection of liked/disliked program elements to current work/career;
- If you could change something about the UWM program, what would it be?

Probe for reasons suggested change would improve program, what problems or issues they would address; include curriculum and "arrangements"

Focus Group Informed Consent
Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

What is the purpose of the study? The purpose of the study in which you are invited to participate is to learn more about the incentives and barriers to enrolling in an MSW program at UWM. As a part of the study, we will be conducting focus groups with workers, supervisors and managers of Bureau (BMCW) vendor sites. Your participation in the focus groups is very important. We will use the focus group as a forum for you to tell us about your perceptions of what is needed to encourage more workers to enroll in and obtain an Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree. Your perceptions of the barriers and incentives to obtaining and MSW while employed at the Bureau will be the primary focus. We will also ask about your interest in part-time *vs*. full time educational opportunities and your knowledge and perceptions of the current Child Welfare Training Program at UWM.

Who will be participating? We will be conducting a number of focus groups. Each of these groups will consist of about 8 – 10 Bureau staff and will be conducted at an accessible community site. Workers and supervisory/managerial staff will be interviewed in separate groups.

How will the groups be conducted? Each group will last approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours, and you will receive time off from your regular work duties to participate. We will be audio taping the groups to ensure your responses are recorded accurately. Once the tape is transcribed and the information is verified as correct, the tape will be destroyed.

Will the information given in the groups be confidential? We will do everything possible to protect your identity and keep confidential any information you give us during the groups. Your name will not be on any tapes, notes, or transcriptions. Your name will be kept in one computer file that can only be accessed by the study investigators and which will be erased after the tapes have been transcribed. While your employer will know that you are participating in a group (because of the need to give you time off), your comments will not be identified with you personally in any way. Only the researchers involved in the study will be able to listen to tapes or look at transcripts.

What will happen to the information? Information gathered in the groups will be used to develop a report to the Bureau on how to increase educational opportunities. If we mention your particular view on a subject, we will not use your name and we will make sure that those reading the report cannot tell who made the comment. We may also use some information for academic journal articles and presentations to a broader professional audience who may be interested in this topic.

Are there any risks to participating? If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond or you can refuse to answer. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not participate will not negatively affect your employment status.

Are there any benefits to participating? Your opinions are very important to us in advising the Bureau about options for supporting graduate education for their workforce. In addition, this is an opportunity for your views to be heard and incorporated in how UWM might design and deliver graduate programs that are more compatible with the employment expectations of child welfare workers.

If you have any questions before deciding to participate, please contact us directly:

Susan J. Rose, Ph.D.
Helen Bader School of Social Welfare
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
P.O. Box 786
Milwaukee, WI 53201
sjrose@uwm.edu
(414) 229-6301

Steve McMurtry, Ph.D.
Helen Bader School of Social Welfare
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
P.O. Box 786
Milwaukee, WI 53201
mcmurtry@uwm.edu
(414) 229-2249

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form below:

By signing below, you are affirming that you are 21 years or older, that you have received an explanation of the focus group and that you agree to participate. You also understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw even after you sign this document. Please feel free to make a copy of this form to keep.

Signature: _____Date: _____

By signing below you are agreeing to allow the focus group to be audio taped.

Signature: _____Date: _____

Witness _____ Date: _____

This research has been approved by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a one year period. If you have any complaints about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Chris Booth Furness
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Department of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229-6016

Although Chris Booth Furness will ask your name, all complaints are kept in confidence.

CWLA Focus Group Interview Guide
On Retention of Workers and Supervisors

1. What are the primary reasons that you and other workers/ supervisors like you choose to continue working with the Bureau and its partner agencies?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of the job or the work that you do that are particularly rewarding?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of your particular organization/ agency/team that make you more likely to remain in your current position.

- What are some of the personal characteristics that you have (or need) to continue to work in your current position?

Follow-up issues to address if not raised in response to the above questions:

- Quality of supervision
- Salary and benefits
- Workload
- Training
- Opportunities for advancement
- Clarity of expectations
- Support/recognition

2. What are the primary reasons that you and other workers/ supervisors like you think about leaving or actually leave positions with the Bureau and its partner agencies?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of the job or the work that you do that are particularly problematic and likely to result in workers/supervisors leaving their current positions?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of your particular organization/ agency/team that are particularly problematic and make you more likely to leave your current position.

Follow-up issues to address if not raised in response to the above questions:

- Quality of supervision
- Salary and benefits
- Workload

- Training
- Opportunities for advancement
- Clarity of expectations
- Support/recognition

3. What are some specific changes or actions that the Bureau and its partner agencies could implement that would have a positive impact on retention of workers/supervisors?

Focus Group Informed Consent
Child Welfare League of America

What is the purpose of the focus groups? The purpose of the focus groups is to help us learn more about the reasons why workers choose to continue working in or leave their direct service jobs with their agencies and the BMCW. We will be gathering information from a number of other sources, including a written survey, but need to hear directly from the workers themselves to be sure we have all the information we need from the people most involved. Our goal is to use the information you provide to make recommendations to the Bureau and your agency regarding the changes they could make to improve the retention of its direct service work force.

Who will be participating? We will be conducting a total of 10 separate focus groups, each consisting of 10-12 people. The groups will represent workers from all the major direct service positions employed by BMCW (i.e., ongoing, safety, adoption, out-of-home, initial assessment, and intake). All participation is completely voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time with no repercussions.

How will the groups be conducted? Each group will last from 1 ½ to 1 ¾ hours. You will receive time off from your regular duties to participate. The CWLA group facilitator will structure the session by asking a series of questions. Group members will respond to each question as they wish. The facilitator will follow up to help clarify and expand on group member responses. A second CWLA staff person will take detailed notes of the comments made by group participants.

Will the information given in the groups be confidential? We will make every possible effort to protect your identity and to ensure that any information you give us during the group is kept confidential. Your name will not show up on any notes or summaries of the session. In addition, only CWLA staff involved in the project will have access to any of the information from the session, including the sign-in sheet. Our report to the Bureau will include only summary information and we will make every effort to ensure that no comments can be traced to any individual person. Your employer will know that you are participating, since they will have authorized the time needed for you to be involved, but your comments will not be identified personally with you in any way. As part of their signed consent, other members of the group also agree to keep all information from the session confidential.

What will happen to the information? The information gathered in the focus groups will be used (along with a host of other data) to develop a report that will be made available to the BMCW, the State Department of Health and Family Services, and the five project sites. If we use your particular views on a subject, we will not use your name and we will make sure that no one reading the report will be able to tell who made the comment. We may also share the information as part of written reports or presentations to a larger professional audience who may be interested in this topic.

Are there any risks to participating? We do not foresee any significant risks resulting from your participation in the group. If any of the questions or comments made during the session make you uncomfortable, you can refuse to answer, and you may terminate your participation at any time.

Are there any benefits to participating? Your opinions are very important to us in developing recommendations for the BMCW and participating agencies. It is our hope that the focus groups will help to produce changes that will improve the working conditions of agency staff at all the sites.

If you have any questions about the focus groups or the larger project, please contact:

Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.
Child Welfare League of America
2 Adams Place, Suite 305
Quincy, MA 02169
falwon@cwla.org
617.769.4008

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph.D.
Child Welfare League of America
2 Adams Place, Suite 305
Quincy, MA 02169
areitz@cwla.org
617.769.4011

If you decide to participate, please sign the consent form below:

By signing below, you are affirming that you are 21 years of age or older, have received an explanation of the purpose of the focus group and the manner in which the information will be handled, understand that detailed notes of the session will be kept, and agree to participate. Your signature also indicates that you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw at any time, even after the form is signed.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Name (printed): _____

This project has been approved by the Child Welfare League of America's Institutional Review Board. If you have any complaints about your treatment as a participant in the focus groups, please contact:

Oronde Miller
Human Protections Administrator
Child Welfare League of America
50 F Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20001-1530
omiller@cwla.org
202.639.4915

Appendix C

Human Resource Functions: Recruitment and Selection

Prepared by

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph,D.
Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

Introduction

The primary focus of our overall assessment and review has been on BMCW's difficulties in retaining its worker-level staff, particularly its ongoing case managers. While recruitment of sufficient, qualified applicants has not been identified as a major issue for the Bureau, workforce research has shown that several aspects of the recruitment and hiring process can significantly impact worker retention over the long run. This report highlights current best practice in recruitment and selection of worker-level staff, particularly as it relates to jurisdictions where significant portions of the work have been contracted out to private agencies, and makes recommendations regarding possible modifications to the processes currently in place at the Bureau and its partner agencies.

Currently, each of the Bureau's partner agencies (Children's Family and Community Partnerships; La Causa; Lutheran Social Services, First Choice for Children; and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin) manages the recruitment, selection, and hiring process for their own workers, in relative isolation from the others' efforts. The goal of this brief review is to determine if a more collaborative or centralized recruitment and selection process would be likely to result in: (1) recruitment of more, and more qualified candidates; (2) selection of candidates who are more likely to be effective workers, as well as workers who would stay for longer periods of employment; and (3) reduced duplication of effort during the recruitment and selection process and, thus, savings of both time and expense.

Process

Information for this report was obtained from three primary sources. First, we reviewed the literature on recruitment and selection processes in child welfare agencies. Second, we contacted both public and private agency personnel in five states where significant

privatization efforts had been undertaken (i.e., Kansas, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Florida, and Alabama) to assess the extent to which they had developed collaborative or centralized recruitment and selection processes. Third, we contacted personnel in two additional state-operated systems (i.e., Connecticut and Vermont) to assess the extent to which their recruitment and selection processes have been centralized, as opposed to being dispersed to regional or area offices.

Findings

Literature Review

While the hiring process consists of a number of steps, the published literature has focused on two primary areas that are viewed as having potential impact on the long-term retention of workers—recruitment and selection. The following discussion focuses on issues in these areas most applicable to the Bureau's current situation.

Recruitment

The recruitment literature describes the importance of developing a systematic recruitment plan (Imbornone, in press; Joiner, 2002) that contains at least the following five critical steps (Reitz, in press):

1. Target specific job categories.
2. Identify the target recruitment audiences.
3. Develop an effective recruitment message.
4. Identify the strategies most likely to get the message to the targeted audience.
5. Evaluate the impact of all recruitment efforts.

Were the Bureau to develop such a plan, it would directly target recruitment of ongoing case managers, but, given the many similarities across positions, it would be possible to recruit for all the Bureau's direct service positions with the same basic approach and materials. The Bureau's target audience for recruiting workers would consist of people with MSWs, BSWs, bachelor's degrees in related human service fields, and people enrolled in educational programs working toward those degrees. The recruitment message would have to be crafted with the Bureau and the specific jobs in mind, but the research suggests that direct service applicants tend to respond best to messages that emphasize work that is mission driven, is challenging and varied, offers career development opportunities, and emphasizes teamwork and a high degree of staff support and assistance (Reitz, in press).

In terms of strategies, the literature (Graef, Potter & Rohde, in press; Imbornone, in press; Joiner, 2002; Reitz, in press) suggests three approaches that are likely to have the most impact for the Bureau—college and university relationships, current worker referrals, and use of the agency website. The Bureau already has an excellent relationship with the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee's School of Social Work, which includes involvement in placement, training, internships, and research. Expanding such relationships to additional colleges and universities in the region would provide a larger

and broader range of potential applicants. The literature also suggests that current worker referrals are an excellent source for new workers. Many agencies have developed systematic programs, including monetary reinforcement, to encourage current employees to recruit new applicants, and there is some evidence that workers recruited in this way have lower turnover than those recruited in more traditional fashion (Graef et al., in press). Finally, in today's market, most job applicants do the majority of their information gathering and job searching on the internet and by accessing agency web sites. The Bureau may want to consider developing a web site that can be used for this purpose. Regardless of the specific recruitment strategies undertaken, it will be important to systematically evaluate their relative effectiveness. At the very least, it will be important to assess which strategies produce the most applicants, the most hires, and the most workers who stay with the Bureau for at least a year or longer.

There is little discussion in the literature of multi-agency recruitment collaborations. The closest approximations are job-posting sites or "job banks," which are operated by a number of private provider state associations and by at least one state (Connecticut), which has opened its state job-posting site to its contracting private agencies.

Selection

There are two strategies frequently discussed in the literature that are designed to improve agency selection of applicants. The first strategy, often referred to as "Realistic Job Preview," is designed to provide applicants with a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the job and its various demands. The second strategy, often referred to as "Competency-Based Selection," provides a systematic process for identifying the critical skills and characteristics of effective workers and then designs specific assessment and interviewing strategies to select applicants who have those skills and characteristics.

One of the most frequent reasons workers give for leaving a job, especially during the first 6-9 months of employment, is that the job was significantly different from what they expected. In child welfare work, this often means that workers expected to be able to spend more time with their children and families, less time in the office documenting their work, and less time responding to crises and resolving conflicts with clients, other providers, and the courts. This is a surprise to no one who is involved in the hiring process, and much interview time is often spent trying to provide applicants with a realistic picture of what the job will be like. But, because such verbal descriptions are often not effective, many agencies are now moving toward providing video job previews as a way to better prepare workers for the reality of the work (Graef et al., in press). Such "realistic job previews" are designed to show, in vivid detail, the good, the bad, and the ugly of the work that applicants can expect to do. They aid in the selection process in at least two ways. First, they give applicants better information regarding the nature and demands of the job, which enables them to make more informed decisions about whether they are really interested in such work (applicants sometimes remove themselves from consideration after viewing the video). Second, they provide interviewers with excellent

opportunities to discuss difficult topics with prospective applicants and to get a better feel for how they will respond to the difficulties that will arise during their employment.

Graef et al. (in press) have developed and are using such a video in Nebraska, and at least two New England states are in the process of developing them. Ideally, the Bureau would develop a job preview video that targets the particular issues of importance in Milwaukee. But, given the similarities of child welfare work across jurisdictions, it may be possible to utilize one of the other available products.

Several well-known writers (Bernotavicz & Wischmann, 2000; Graef, Potter, & Rohde, 2002; Graef et al., in press) have developed and advocated for systems designed to improve the selection of effective child welfare workers. In general, these systems consist of four basic steps. Step one is to conduct a systematic job analysis to determine the skills, knowledge, and characteristics that are needed for a worker to be effective in a particular position. As an example, Bernotavicz & Wischmann (2000) identified the following nine critical areas:

- Interpersonal Skills
- Self-Awareness/Confidence
- Analytic Thinking
- Flexibility
- Observational Skills
- Job Commitment/Values
- Communication Skills
- Results Orientation
- Technical Skills/Knowledge

Step two is to develop strategies for assessing the extent to which applicants possess the identified skills and characteristics. Typically, the assessment strategies consist of tests or inventories completed by the applicant, work samples and/or simulations, and structured interviews. The third step is to develop systems for using the information gathered to help make hiring decisions, and the fourth step is to continuously evaluate the extent to which the selection process succeeds at consistently identifying workers that are both effective and stay with the agency for long periods of time.

Logically, structuring the selection process in this way makes excellent sense, and there are some data to support the efficacy of making hiring decisions using these types of programs. However, such systems require significant development, both in terms of time and expense, and, given the Bureau's current priorities and needs, that investment does not appear justified at this time.

Interviews

As described earlier, we conducted interviews with personnel in seven states, five where a significant amount of the child welfare work is being contracted out to private agencies and two where all basic child welfare services are still provided by state employees who work out of regional offices. The goal was to assess the extent to which the state and

private agencies (or the state and regional offices) were collaborating to accomplish recruitment, screening, and selection processes.

In the privatized states, we found no evidence of collaboration in recruitment, screening, or selection. The various states and each involved private agency developed and implemented its own process for accomplishing these tasks. In fact, there was little interest from any of the parties in moving toward increasing collaboration on any of these tasks. They tended to view agency control over these functions as critical to agency autonomy and as essential in producing diverse approaches to service delivery, one of the advantages of privatization.

In the two states that are publicly operated (centrally administered, but regionally implemented), most (though not all) recruitment is centralized, as is the initial screening for basic job requirements. Even in these states, however, selection and hiring decisions were being made in the regional offices. Both these states had moved from more centralized selection and hiring processes during the past few years for the expressed purpose of giving office administrators more control over the workforce in their offices.

Recommendations

1. Given its rather unique situation (i.e., multiple, closely linked agencies seeking fairly large numbers of similar types of workers in a relatively compact region), we believe that there are distinct advantages to the Bureau developing the capacity to recruit workers in a more centralized manner. Indeed, some of this work has already been initiated by a formal recruitment committee. Specifically, the Bureau should:
   - Develop a clear and compelling recruitment message, along with the printed materials to disseminate the message.
   - Expand its university affiliations and relationships (and, thus, its recruiting capacity) beyond the UWM School of Social Work to other colleges and universities throughout the region.
   - Develop a systematic program (including some form of monetary reward) to encourage current Bureau employees to recruit new workers.
   - Develop (or expand) a Bureau web site to use as a recruitment tool. At the very least, the web site would contain information about the Bureau's mission, the services it provides, the partnering agencies, the kinds of jobs available, the reasons why someone would want to be a Bureau employee (the recruitment message), and an application that could be forwarded directly to all the partner agencies, if appropriate.

2. Develop (or adopt) a Realistic Job Preview video for use in the selection and hiring process, particularly for ongoing case managers. Initial tasks would include:
   - Review currently available materials (e.g., from Nebraska).
   - Determine if available materials are adequate to meet current Bureau needs.
   - If not, design a video specifically for Bureau use and use it at all Bureau sites.

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Appendix D

Human Resource Functions:
Calculation of Worker Turnover

Prepared by

Andrew L. Reitz, Ph,D.
Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.

Child Welfare League of America

General Approaches

Though it would seem that the calculation of worker turnover rates should be a fairly straightforward process, there are almost as many different methods for doing so as there are published reports on the topic. Generally speaking, however, there are two basic approaches.

The first method, which is most widely used in business and industry (and is used in the U.S. Department of Labor statistics), focuses on turnover from the overall agency perspective. This method identifies an annual rate of turnover for an entire agency by dividing the total number of annual separations (for any reason) from the agency by the average monthly employment (number of employees). Thus, an agency with an average monthly employment of 100 workers and 23 separations during a year would have an annual turnover rate of 23%.

The second method, frequently used in human service and child welfare agencies (APHSA, 2001, 2004; CWLA, 2001, 2003), focuses more on turnover as it affects the clients served. This approach typically identifies positions that have direct service responsibilities with clients (and, often, their supervisors), and measures turnover only for those positions. The calculation of annual turnover using this method divides the number of staff leaving the identified position for any reason during the year by the average monthly number of employees in that position.

Given the Bureau's clear focus on continuity of services to clients, the second method is clearly preferable to the first. However, it must be recognized that counting every position separation as turnover, regardless of the reason, has the result of holding the agency accountable for at least two types of turnover that are clearly not the result of unhappiness with

the job or the agency, but are simply part of operating any business. These include turnover that results from employees who are promoted to supervisory positions or who laterally transfer to other similar positions within the agency, as well as turnover that occurs for reasons such as employee retirement, spousal relocations, and child rearing (APHSA (2001, 2004) refers to this as non-preventable turnover).

Recommended Turnover Calculations

As a result of the above considerations, we recommend a multi-pronged approach to analyzing turnover within the Bureau. This approach involves four separate analyses: total turnover by position, turnover resulting from internal transfers and promotions, turnover deemed non-preventable (using the APHSA definition), and a measure of the direct effect of turnover on clients (i.e., the number of case managers a client experiences during a given year).

The calculations of internal transfers and promotions and "non-preventable" turnover will require that all Bureau agencies collect data on the reasons why workers separate from their positions. These data will need to be gathered as workers leave their positions and should be either a supervisory or human resources responsibility. Each worker who separates from his/her position will need to be categorized as leaving for **one** of the following reasons:

1. Transferred within the agency.
2. Transferred within the Bureau.
3. Promoted within the agency.
4. Promoted within the Bureau.
5. Retired.
6. Deceased.
7. Parenting/child rearing.
8. Spousal job relocation.
9. Full-time graduate education.
10. Any other reason.

Descriptions of the actual calculation methods for each of the measures are provided below. We also recommend that turnover by calculated and analyzed on a quarterly basis. Annual calculations are too infrequent to be useful in making program adjustments and evaluating programmatic changes, while monthly calculations are likely to be highly variable and not indicative of trends that may be occurring gradually over time.

Total Turnover by Position (for any reason)

The basic calculation of total turnover is the following:

Total Turnover = Number of Separations from the Specified Position

Number of Positions

For the quarterly calculation, the numerator is the total count of separations from the position during the quarter. The denominator is the average of the number of filled positions on the first day of each month of the quarter.

For the annual calculation, the numerator is the total count of separations from the position during the year. The denominator is the average of the number of filled positions on the first day of each month of the year.

Turnover Due to Promotions and Transfers

The basic calculation for turnover due to promotions and transfers (both agency and Bureau) is the following:

Turnover Due to Promotions and Transfers = **Number of Separations from the Specified Position Due to Promotions and Transfers**
Number of Positions

The numerator is the number of workers separating from the specified position during the designated time period (i.e., quarter or year) for reasons 1-4 above. The denominator is the same as for the total turnover calculation.

Non-Preventable Turnover

The basic calculation for non-preventable turnover is the following:

Turnover Due to Non-Preventable Reasons = **Number of Separations from the Specified Position For Non-Preventable Reasons**
Number of Positions

The numerator is the number of workers separating from the specified position during the designated time period (i.e., quarter or year) for reasons 5-9 above. The denominator is the same as for the total turnover calculation.

Number of Workers per Client

While the total turnover calculation described above provides an indirect measure of the impact that turnover has on the continuity of work with children and families, we recommend an additional measure to assess this issue more directly. The most direct measure is to simply count the number of different worker-level staff assigned to a family during a specified time span. Since the core worker for most families in the system is the ongoing case manager, that is the position for which this measure is most appropriate (although similar data could also be collected on safety services workers). We recommend collecting and reporting data on the number of different ongoing case managers assigned to individual clients during a one-year period. This information should be available directly from the WISACWIS system, and would be reported on an annual basis. The data would be presented as the average number of workers assigned to a case each year, as well as the percent of families who experienced one, two, three, four, or more workers during the year.

A report including all four of the above measures would provide a comprehensive picture of the amount of turnover experienced for each identified position within the Bureau, the primary reasons that the turnover has occurred, and the impact of that turnover on the clients. The following (using data from multiple sources) represents an example of the types of information one could expect from such an analysis.

1. Total turnover of ongoing case management staff during 2003 (using Bureau figures and the above method of calculation) was 43.3% (98 separations divided by 226.1 average positions filled).
2. Though the Bureau has not collected data on the reasons for staff separations, the CWLA 2003 Salary Study indicates that 9.7% of reported turnover for private agency case manager positions resulted from promotions and transfers within the agency. Applying that rate to the Bureau's 2003 data would suggest that 10 of the 98 workers who left their positions could be attributed to these types of separations.
3. Data from the 2001 APHSA State and County Workforce Survey indicate that about 45% of their turnover was related to "non-preventable" causes (as described above). Applying that same rate to the Bureau's 2003 data would mean that another 44 workers left for "non-preventable" reasons.

   In this example, then, the turnover data for ongoing case managers during 2003 could be summarized as follows:
   - Total turnover = 43.3% (n = 98)
   - Turnover due to promotions/transfers = 4.4% (n =10)*
   - Other non-preventable turnover = 19.5% (n = 44)*
   - Preventable turnover = 19.5% (n = 44)*

* Note that these figures are extrapolations from data found in national surveys and do not represent actual Bureau data. They are used for illustration purposes only.

4. Finally, data from a recent report to the Bureau (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005), covering a sample of 152 cases from 2004, indicates that a typical client experiences an average of 2.1 ongoing case managers during the course of a year and that nearly 20% of cases experience three or more workers during a typical year.

   It should be noted that the recommended method of calculating total turnover differs in two ways from the turnover data reported for Ongoing Case Managers in the Settlement Agreement Reports. First, the Settlement Agreement Reports provide data on a monthly rather than a quarterly basis.
   Second, the Settlement Agreement Report data divide the number of separations by the number of filled positions **plus the number of new hires** for each period. While such a calculation can be justified as appropriate as long as it is applied consistently, it does create an artificial ceiling on the calculation of turnover of 100%, since no employee can leave more than once during a period. It also has the effect of consistently reducing the percent of turnover reported relative to the recommended method of calculation (e.g., Site 1 turnover data for 2003 is reported to be 24.6% using this method; our recommended method results in a 33.3% rate). The primary difficulty with the Settlement Agreement method of calculation is that it is not used in any other reports on turnover that we have found in the literature and, as such, makes comparisons with data collected from other sources impossible. If the Settlement Agreement data must continue to be collected and reported in the current manner, the data can be easily recalculated using the recommended format.

Implementation Steps

There are two steps required for implementing this revised method of calculating turnover: identifying the positions for which data will be collected and specifying how the data will be collected and reported. Recommendations for each step are included below.

1. Identifying Relevant Positions.

   BMCW staff have clearly identified the "Ongoing Case Manager" position and the "Supervisor" position for those staff as top priorities. Each of the five sites should calculate their turnover rates for these two critical positions. Similar calculations should also be made for "Safety Services" workers and their "Supervisors" at each of the five sites.

Although turnover may not be a serious issue for other BMCW workers at this point, we also recommend collecting comparable turnover data for the following categories of workers and their supervisors:

- "Adoption" staff and "Supervisors"
- "Out of Home Care" staff and "Supervisors"
- "Initial Assessment" staff and "Supervisors" (could be calculated separately by site or as a single group)
- "Child Welfare Intake" staff and "Supervisors"

Turnover data for these positions will be useful for comparison purposes, as well as to ensure that future potential turnover issues are detected early.

2. Data Collection and Reporting.

   We recommend that the data be gathered by designated personnel at each site and responsible agency on a quarterly basis and be forwarded to the appropriate Bureau staff, who will assemble a comprehensive report. The following data will need to be collected:

   - The number of separations for each identified position for each quarter.
   - The reason for each separation, using the 10 categories identified on page two of this report (if the reason is unknown, it should be counted as "any other reason").
   - For each identified position, the number of filled positions on the first day of each month during the quarter.

   As described above, the data reflecting client continuity of service (i.e., the number of different ongoing case managers assigned to a case during a one-year period) should be collected directly from the WISACWIS system. These data should be collected by a designated Bureau employee with access to and knowledge of the WISACWIS system, and should require little or no additional data collection effort on the part of program and agency staff.

   Together, these data will provide a comprehensive summary of turnover throughout the Bureau's worker-level staff and they will also serve as the primary tools for evaluating the success of all retention-focused interventions that are implemented, both during and following the project.

Issues in Interpreting the Data

There is a general (though often unstated) assumption in much of the literature on worker retention that all turnover represents a negative outcome and that 0% turnover is the ideal circumstance. This is clearly not the case, particularly when turnover data are collected using the stringent method that we have recommended here. That is why nearly all large-scale surveys of worker turnover in human service and child welfare agencies (APHSA, 2001, 2004; CWLA 2001, 2003) provide additional data to reflect turnover that occurs for either positive (i.e., promotions and internal transfers) or non-preventable reasons (e.g., retirement, death, relocation).

Thus, while all turnover from direct service positions directly affects the children and families served, a significant percentage may be beyond the control of agencies to address. This is by no means a rationale for not intervening to reduce staff turnover. Rather, it is simply meant to assist in interpreting the data that are gathered, especially for groups both inside and outside the system that may react negatively to turnover rates that approach 40% annually.

References

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